Islamic Education, Diversity, and National Identity



Dīnī Madāris in India Post 9/11

Editors
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Contents

Preface

Helmut Reifeld

The essays in this book emanate from a conference entitled 'Madrasa Education in India: Islamic Education, Diversity, and National Identity post-9/11,' held at Neemrana Fort Palace, Rajasthan, between November 30 and December 2, 2003. This conference was initiated and organized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Germany, as part of a worldwide series of conferences, workshops or seminars embedded in a program called 'Dialogue with Islam.' Although there is, on the side of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, already a long tradition of dialogue programs in general and of dialogue with Islam in particular, there are two factors which encouraged us to organize this particular conference. The first of these is that, as compared to the international level of attention, interest in Islam in South Asia is lagging behind. The second reason is that too much of the contemporary international attention on *madrasa* education is fixed on its alleged fundamentalist impact. The intention, therefore, was neither to enter deeply into theological or even dogmatic disputes nor to use this kind of discussion about cultural differences as an explanation for political problems. At the same time, it cannot suffice to restrict oneself to the level of a mere academic exercise or to remain on the level of goodwill, common sense and general statements about tolerance and respect for each other. What is needed is broader and comprehensive understanding.

In the course of the conference, it was not always easy to find the bridge between the role of *madrasa* education in the past and its role in the present. For many centuries, these Muslim religious educational institutions—the *dînî madâris*—held a key position among

educational institutions in the Indian subcontinent. Some of the participants preferred to look at the more glorious past rather than the criticised present, when—in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the following new 'war on terrorism'—*madrasa* education was given an unprecedented kind of attention. While in the USA and other Western countries, the new focus of criticism and accusation was at the beginning pointed against *madrasa* education in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in particular—identifying them as breeding grounds for terrorist activities—they more and more referred generally to this kind of 'education' as dubious, suspicious and dangerous. At the same time, in parts of Indian society, the new context of international debate gave rise to older anti-Islamic sentiments, which tried to include the Indian *madâris* into the stream of international impeachment. However, both the international neglect towards the Indian case as well as the Hindu nationalist critique—supported by large parts of the mass media in India itself—are marked by a conspicuous absence of factual information regarding the diversity and the activities of Muslim alternative systems of education in India.

Any attempt, however, to understand *madrasa* education in India today cannot succeed without an adequate knowledge of its past. All over the subcontinent, it developed a wide range of diverse educational phenomena. India is a singular case where a large community—about 130 to 140 million Muslims—exists as a religious minority. As such, they had and have to adapt, to accommodate and to integrate, although with the rise of Hindu nationalism their capacity to do so has been increasingly questioned. Since the autumn of 2001, the intensified debate on *madrasa* education in India revolves primarily around the following questions: Is there a link between *madâris* and violence, anti-national activities or even terrorism? How transparent are these alternative educational networks in terms of funding, spread and patronage? And, what are the political implications of their educational system? The importance of these questions goes beyond the Indian context, where both the struggle for acceptance of religious and cultural diversity and the struggle to find a common basis of national identity are at stake.

In the course of the discussions it was commonly accepted that any closer look into *madrasa* education in India reveals certain deficiencies. From case to case, they may be accused of following a limited curriculum, and lacking education in modern sciences and modern languages as well as any understanding of different cultures. In many

cases they do not seem to do justice to the ideal of equal education for women. They often appear as closed against any influences from the outside, more interested in 'the other within' rather than integration into the outside world. In other cases, however, they also prove able to compete successfully with similar educational institutions and make up for some of the general deficiencies within the Indian educational system. But nearly all allegations against them as breeding grounds for terrorist activities have to date been proved baseless.

At the same time, especially since autumn 2001, their representatives find themselves on the defensive. They feel under pressure to 'explain' and defend their institutions against accusations of backwardness. Many react with an aversion to the notion of 'multiculturalism', associated with a dominant West they perceive as 'aggressive.' Although many representatives of *madrasa* institutions are open to and interested in dialogue with outsiders, some do not feel able to dialogue on the same level because they lack any secular understanding of religion which dominates most discourses in the West. One result of the conference certainly is that future dialogue initiatives should not regard *madâris* primarily as 'closed' but rather support them in their willingness to open up to the challenges of the 21st century and to the conditions of a rapidly globalizing world.

The present book not only provides some useful information about *madrasa* education in India but also hopes to contribute to the promotion of a worldwide process of dialogue with Islam. The articles were written with the idea of promoting and carrying forward the spirit of dialogue, rather than ending it with a final statement. It should be mentioned that all opinions and judgments expressed in the following articles are those of the individual authors. Inputs, however, have come from many quarters, in the process of preparation as well as of publication. In the first place, initial discussions with Professor Imtiaz Ahmad and Dr Mareike Winkelmann have to be mentioned. Without Professor Ahmad's excellent connections, this group of contributors would not have been found. Sincere words of thanks also have to be given to all the contributors, who not only presented a paper and participated in the discussion, but who also made the effort to revise their paper in the light of these discussions. Most of all, our gratitude goes to Dr Jan-Peter Hartung whose scrutiny and meticulous editing made this publication possible. In addition, Dr Hartung wrote an enlightening introduction, binding together this collection of essays, incorporating parts of the original discussions and filling up most of the gaps the

conference had left behind. Further on, our gratitude goes to Sage Publications, particularly to Omita Goyal, Mimi Choudhury and their editorial team, who brought out this book so quickly. Without the constant vigilance and manifold efforts of Manu and Mohita, however, neither the organization of the workshop nor the final publication of this book would have been realised. Finally, we would like to thank Mark Chalîl Bodenstein of Erfurt University, Germany, for his careful proofreading of the entire manuscript.

Berlin

Towards a Reform of the Indian *Madrasa*? An Introduction

JAN-PETER HARTUNG

Only a few weeks after September 11, 2001—the day of the fatal attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., by a number of Arab Muslim fighters—allegations against Muslim religious educational institutions in India, the *dînî madâris*, dominated the Indian national media, accusing *dînî madâris* of being breeding grounds for terrorists.[1] These allegations originated from the fact that the radically traditionalist Tâlibân in Afghanistan are a product of a particular offshoot of Deobandî Muslim scholarship which arose in Pakistan during the struggle against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s. The roots of this offshoot, however, are found in the historical context of the mid-19th century's Indo-Muslim reformist scholarly movement. This movement was originally characterized by a rather apolitical and definitely non-violent attitude.[2] The Tâlibân in turn provided shelter as well as logistic support to a number of radical Arab Muslims, the most prominent among them being the leaders of al-Qâʻida, Usâma b. Lâdin (b. 1957) and Ayman az-Zawâhirî (b. 1951). Ibn Lâdin and his companions used hard-to-control Afghanistan as a base for their worldwide *jihâd* 'against the Americans who keep the Land of the Holy Places occupied,' as Ibn Lâdin's famous public appeal of August 26, 1996 was titled.[3]

[1] For detailed information on this, cf. the contribution of Mareike Jule Winkelmann to this volume.
[2] Of course, this apolitical attitude had already changed in the course of the Indian struggle for independence from British rule in the early 20th century. The Jamʻiyyat-ʻulamâ'-i Hind, founded in 1919 in the course of the Khilâfat agitation, must be considered the first political aspiration of an important section of the Deobandî *ʻulamâ'*.
[3] The subtitle of the so-called 'Lâdinese Epistle' reads, in reference to a saying of the Prophet Muhammad: *Drive out the Polytheists from the Arab Peninsula*.

Despite a certain logical consistency in the causal chain: 'Deoband—Tâlibân—al-Qâʻida—9/11,' it is remarkable that the allegations against *dînî madâris* in South Asia were not made against those *dînî madâris* in Pakistan out of whose *madrasa* system the Tâlibân evolved, but almost exclusively against India-based institutions.[4] News of recently emerging *dînî madâris* in the areas bordering Nepal alerted the Indian public and led to an increase of anti-Muslim rhetoric by Hindu communalist forces, which were politically backed by the then-ruling Bhâratîya Janatâ Party (BJP).

It is interesting to note that allegations against Muslim religious educational institutions were hardly made against those institutions in the majority of Middle Eastern countries, but in countries with a considerable Muslim population, for instance, in sub-Saharan Africa or in Southeast Asian countries. However, an exception to this is the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from where most of the attackers of 9/11 originated[5] and which we will therefore have to discuss separately. Finally, *madâris* came under heavy critique in Europe, primarily in Germany, where at least four of the fighters involved in the attacks of 9/11 lived for a few years and where it is believed that they were introduced to religious radicalism.[6]

The title of this appeal clearly indicates that the prime targets of al-Qâʻida activists are, besides the Western societies, their respective home societies. This is also obvious in the activities of the Jordanian, Abû Musʻab az-Zarqâwî (b. 1966), and his Jamâʻat at-tawhîd wa-l-jihâd.

[4] Here one should recall that the Pakistani government very soon joined hands with the United States and its allies in their so-called 'Global War on Terrorism.'

[5] It seems interesting to note that 15 out of the 19 attackers of 9/11 were, or had previously been, citizens of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This clearly corresponds to the above-mentioned reference to the former Saudi Arabian citizen Usâma b. Lâdin and his endeavor to liberate the kingdom from what he perceives as American occupation and to re-establish a religious regime from which the current rulers are seen to have deviated.

[6] The accusation against *madâris* in Germany of being hotbeds of radicalism and even militancy already existed in the late 1980s. This might be illustrated by the example of the German social education worker Wolfgang Ritsch who described 'the Qur'ânic schools run by the different umbrella organizations in the Federal Republic as belonging primarily to the conservative to the reactionary right-wing political camp'; he even speaks of 'terror as means in the argument with political and religious adversaries' (Ritsch 1987: 102, 104; translation mine).

In order to be able to place the allegations against *dînî madâris* in India post-9/11 in context, it makes sense to investigate the nexus of Indian, sub-Saharan (in African countries like Mali and Senegal), South-east Asian (in countries like Thailand and Malaysia) and European (in countries like Germany) Muslim religious education. Additionally, we believe that such an investigation will promote better understanding of the reasons why the religious educational systems in Middle Eastern countries, particularly in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, escaped public criticism.

I

The answer to this question seems to be that in all the above-mentioned cases on the fringes of the so-called Muslim world,[7] Muslim religious education is not supervised by the state. But in Muslim-majority countries, paternalistic state control over religious education is found—for example, in the incorporation of the famous Cairene al-Azhar University into the domain of the Egyptian state in 1961, the integration of the religious educational system into the government-administered educational system in Morocco in the late 1970s, and in the development of a state-governed system of religious education in Pakistan during the rule of General Diyâ' al-Haqq (d. 1988).[8]

All these states, regardless of the particular form of government they had adopted, have Muslims majorities. Thus it is not surprising

[7] Here I am quite aware of the problematic character of these terms. I will, however, follow the authentically shaped perception of the center as the place from which the religion of Islam originated, where its most venerated holy places are located, and to which Muslims all over the world prostrate in their ritual prayers. Similarly, the notion of a 'Muslim world' follows the idea of a single community united in a religious creed, the *umma al-wâhida*, which is derived from the Qur'ânic verse 23:52: 'And verily this community of yours is a united community, and I am your Lord. Fear me and no other!' [*wa-'inna hâdhihi 'ummatukum ummatan wâhidatan wa-'ana rabbukum fa-ttaqûn*]. Above that, this notion is supported by the sound Prophetic *hadîth*: 'And even though my *umma* will split into seventy-three groups everything of it will be in the fire except one: It is the community' [*wa-'inna 'ummatî sataftariqu 'alâ thalâthin wa-sab'îna firqa. kulluhâ fî n-nâri 'illâ wâhidatan wa-hiya l-jamâ'a*] (cf. Ibn Mâja *Sunan*, 3982, Kitâb al-fitan 17; at-Tirmidhî *al-Jâmi' as-sahîh*, 2564, Kitâb al-imân 'an rasûl allâh; Ibn Hanbal *Musnad*, 8064).

[8] For the so-called reform of the Azhar by order no. 103/1961, cf. Lemke (1980: 166–234); for the case of Morocco, cf. Tozy (1999: 104–109); for the Pakistani case, cf. Malik (1996: 120–264).

that Muslim religious education is compulsory for all, despite the respective religious creed of the pupils. In Egypt, for instance, Muslim religious education is incorporated in the curriculum of the state-sponsored and state-administered schools; members of religious minorities, most notably Copts,[9] must attend the lessons on Islam as well. Of course, privately maintained Qur'ânic schools [*katâtîb*/ sg.: *kuttâb*] are also found in contemporary Egypt. However, these schools are not considered to be an alternative to the education offered by the government. Instead they provide a kind of religious 'preparatory school' education, which cannot substitute the general education at all, nor does it explicitly attempt to do so.

As already mentioned, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the exception to this rule. The system of religious education guarded by the Saudi state originates from the strategic alliance between the House of Sa'ûd and the religious scholars in the legacy of the 18th century central Arabian scholar Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhâb (d. 1792). This alliance in the so-called *Wahhâbiyya*, which became constitutive for the newly created kingdom in 1932,[10] has had three centuries to grow 'naturally.' However, quite soon after 9/11 many commentators in the West, over and above those in the US government, put the Saudi state under severe pressure to immediately take appropriate steps to reform its educational system. It was widely known that almost all the prominent Saudi Islamists, not least those who were involved in the attacks of 9/11, had—or have had—some affiliation to the largest Islamic University in the kingdom, the Jâmi'a Imâm Muhammad b. Sa'ûd, founded in 1974 in Riyadh.

The conservative and highly inflexible educational system, so the accusations went, provides the foundations for the widespread disapproval of the West, especially of the USA, and the hatred against members of other religious communities, over and above the Jews. The Saudi government first indignantly rejected these demands and rated them as an assault on the Islamic character of the country and interference in its internal affairs. After the external pressure persisted and after the first attacks of al-Qâ'ida activists on targets in Saudi Arabia in May 2003 interrupted the timid process of internal reforms, the Ministry of Education introduced a program to reform the educational

[9] Cf. Herrera (2003: 169f., 180f.)
[10] Cf. Steinberg (2002: 269–300).

system in the kingdom.[11] Nevertheless, the proposed reforms only superficially touched the religious subjects in the curricula, which, in turn, constitute the core of education in Saudi Arabia. Thus, these reforms have so far remained rather cosmetic.[12]

However, the case of Saudi Arabia is the only one we are aware of in the Middle East where the system of religious education was accused of providing at least the ideological foundations for Islamist militancy. Therefore, we are still convinced of the correctness of our argument that public allegations against *dînî madâris* of being hotbeds of terrorism and, related to this, the demand for their fundamental reform, is strongly linked to the lack of state control over religious education as well as to those cases where Muslims constitute a religious minority. In those cases, Muslims tend to strongly advocate secular constitutions to secure the unhindered right to perform their religious obligations, including the quest for and the acquisition of religious knowledge. On the other hand, a secular constitution *per definitionem*[13] does not permit state-sponsored and state-administered religious education. This, in turn, leaves religious education to the responsibility of the religious communities, who are free to define the religious curriculum without state interference. It seems, however, that this poses severe problems to secular governments, which was emphasized by the tragic events of 9/11. In the event that

[11] Cf. Jazâ'irî (2003). I am very much indebted to Guido Steinberg who turned my attention to the exceptional case of Saudi Arabia and to the source on which I base my argument.

[12] The main point of the educational reforms is concerned with the introduction of the obligatory study of the English language from the 6th form. The revision of religious schoolbooks was primarily limited to the questions of *jihâd* and relations with non-Muslims. Cf. Jazâ'irî (2003).

[13] However, the educational politics of the BJP in India have to be considered as a special case. The imposition of *vande mâtaram*, a Hindu religious anthem composed by the Bengali poet and novelist Bankim Candra (d. 1894), to be sung daily in school by every Indian pupil of whatever religion, might serve as an example for undermining the secular Indian Constitution by the advocates of the Hindu religious majority. In Germany, on the other hand, Christian religious education is optional and under the sole supervision of the respective churches. The fact that churches are nominally allowed to use secular schools for their religious instructions is grounded in their special legal status as 'Corporations of Public Law.' The content of the instruction, however, remains the responsibility of the churches alone, and is tolerated as long as it does not conflict with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany. Cf. Korioth (2004).

the religious curriculum does not conform to the principles of the secular constitution—something quite likely when the state abstains from interference in the religious affairs of the multifarious communities—parts of these religious communities might pose some threat to the internal security of the respective countries.[14] The debate on placing Muslim religious education in Germany on an equal footing with the extant Christian religious education, as well as the debates over the establishment of a chair of Islamic Theology at a German university, might be perceived as a reflection of the unease of the governments of the 17 German federal states with the status of Muslim communities in the country in general, and with Muslim religious education and its institutions in particular. Since it became public that the engineering student, Muhammad ʻAtâ, one of the leading suicide attackers on the World Trade Center on 9/11,[15] was a frequent visitor to a particular mosque in Hamburg, the German authorities have become aware of the enormous protest and resistance potential of Muslim migrants that emerges from backyard mosques in Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt or Hamburg.

Leaving aside the German example,[16] the problem with Muslim religious education in developing countries on the so-called periphery of the Muslim world is even more complex and needs closer scrutiny into its distinctive qualities. Despite a formally guaranteed primary education for all by the respective governments in most of the countries under investigation, enrollment in a *madrasa* is often considered the only affordable means for even basic education by large parts of the Muslim populations. Most of these educational institutions teach free of charge. The salaries of the teachers, which are seldom secured by the respective governments, are regularly paid from within the

[14] As the example of Hindu communalist tendencies in India clearly proves, this fact is not confined to Muslim communities alone, even though the latter came more and more into public focus after the end of the Cold War. The armed conflict between US security forces and a radical millenarian Christian sect called the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, in 1993 provides yet another example of a state's collision with religious groups that have forsaken the principles of the constitution. Cf. Tabor and Gallagher (1995: 1–51).
[15] On Muhammad ʻAtâ and his role in the 9/11 attacks, cf. Abdel-Samad (forthcoming).
[16] On the French example, cf. Ternisien (2001); on Great Britain, cf. Bright et al. (2001). For Switzerland and the controversy on the brothers Hanî and Târiq Ramadân, cf. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (February 6, 2003; April 13, 2004; August 26, 2004); Frégosi (2004: 138–141). Cf. also Fetzer and Soper (2005).

Muslim communities themselves, mainly from Islamic endowments [*awqâf*/ sg.: *waqf*]. This, in turn, creates a considerable threat to the government's monopoly on education in general, which is, in quite a number of cases, reflected in the rhetoric of *dînî madâris* as breeding grounds for religious radicals, or worse, terrorists. In this regard, the cases of Mali and Senegal, for instance, resemble to some extent those of the *dînî madâris* in India after 9/11.[17]

Moreover, the fact that the doyens of Muslim religious education in Mali—Kabiné Kaba, Muhammad Fodé Keita, Mamadou Lamine Tounkara and, not least Mahmoud Bâ b. ʻUmar al-Fûtî (d. 1978)—have been educated in the Middle East (at al-Azhar in Cairo and in Mecca) poses the question of external funding of *madrasa* education. This question is at the core of a considerable number of the current allegations against *dînî madâris* in India and elsewhere. After all, the above-mentioned African scholars have received the start-up capital for the first *madâris* in their own country from their places of education.[18] This external funding is not always as transparent as in the case of the *madrasa* projects of the Aga Khan Foundation in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, where attempts are made to secure the primary education of Muslim children and youths, along with careful monitoring of the curriculum in order to develop practical skills and, at the same time, avoid possible radicalization of the pupils.[19] As is widely known, in the early 1960s the kingdom of Saudi Arabia began to support the development of Islamic religious infrastructure all over the world in exchange for the propagation of the rigid interpretation of Islam by the Wahhâbî religious establishment in the kingdom.

By the way, the network of International Islamic Universities, satellites of the mother institution established in Medina in 1961, and—even more problematic—international branches of the already mentioned Jâmiʻa Imâm Muhammad b. Saʻûd in Riyadh (e.g. in the Mauritanian capital Nouakchott, or even in Fairfax in the US State of Virginia)[20]

[17] Similar accusations were already made in Mali and Senegal in the 1980s. Cf. Brenner (2000: 254–256); Loimeier (2002: 130–134).

[18] Cf. Brenner (2000: 54–84).

[19] Cf. Aga Khan Foundation (2002: 13, 26; 2004: 15, 39).

[20] Both branches (the 'Arab and Saudi Islamic Institute' in the Mauritanian capital Nouakchott, and the 'Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences in America' in Fairfax, VA) have recently been shut down on the ground that they disseminate a highly aggressive Islamic ideology. I am grateful to Guido Steinberg for drawing my attention to these cases.

became very instrumental in this activity, as did the Muslim World League [*Râbitat al-‘âlam al-islâmî*], founded in Mecca in the same year.[21] Saudi money probably also made its way to India, where the historical affinity of the Wahhâbî scholars to the religious reformist movement of the Ahl-i hadîth is widely known. Indeed, members of the Ahl-i hadîth make no effort to conceal this intellectual as well as financial relationship.[22] Nevertheless, the external funding of *dînî madâris* played an important role in the rhetoric against these Muslim religious educational institutions in India. It has not yet been forgotten that al-Qâ‘ida leader Usâma b. Lâdin, son of one of the most important and wealthiest building contractors in Saudi Arabia, has for decades financed militant Islamism all over the world, most notably, of course, in Afghanistan.[23]

The final point that needs to be addressed to analyze the exceptional situation of Muslim religious education in the countries on the periphery of the Muslim world pertains to the lack of a central religious authority. This issue adds to the complexity of this topic. Since the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the text of the revelation has undergone a vast number of varying interpretations, none of which can claim infallibility. It goes without saying that in the course of history we have observed certain processes toward canonization of particular interpretations of the revelation—God's final address to Man, as is firmly believed by Muslims—and attempts to establish something like orthodoxy in different geographical regions.[24] However, none of these

[21] Cf. Schulze (1990: 181–212, 279–291).

[22] One may just think of the apologetic treatise *Tarjumân-i wahhâbiyya* [*The Interpreter of the Wahhâbiyya*] of Siddîq Hasan Khân Qannawjî (d. 1890), one of the most influential personalities in the early history of the movement. For information on current intellectual as well as financial affiliations between the Ahl-i hadîth and the Wahhâbiyya, cf. e.g. the contributions of Paul Jackson, S.J., and Mareike Jule Winkelmann in this volume.

[23] It seems interesting to me to note that in almost all the polemics, Usâma b. Lâdin is still considered a citizen of Saudi Arabia and is thus inseparably linked to its religious establishment, even though it is common knowledge that the Saudi government had already deprived him of his Saudi citizenship in 1994, after having him forced into exile into the Sudan of the Islamist leader Hasan at-Turâbî (b. 1932) three years earlier.

[24] In this context one should be aware that it is highly problematic to speak of 'orthodoxy' in Sunnî Islam at all, because neither the Qur’ânic concept of Man nor its prophetology support such an idea. The development of an orthodoxy among Shî‘ites, just by the way, is inseparably linked to its 'Imâmology' and,

attempts have been acknowledged by the entirety of the Muslim community, the above-mentioned *umma al-wâhida*, in the manner that the Pope was at times recognized as the highest apostolic authority in the ecumenicity by the Western Christian Church. A theological reason for the binding character of the judgments passed, such as the dogma of the support of the Holy Spirit for the infallibility of the Pope, is not to be found in Islam at all. The lack of a central religious authority in Islam is yet another problem that a secular state has to face, and this adds to the number of problems already touched upon. The wide variety of interpretations of the revelation, each one claiming absolute validity and commitment, leaves the governments more or less alone to decide which one of those prevailing interpretations should be acknowledged and, as a consequence, imposed as the basis for their further politics in regard to the Muslim communities under their respective aegis. Even though we see the attempts of Muslim elites to set up representative councils, which could serve as interlocutors with the governments, we can also see the emergence of counter-councils, contesting the legitimacy of the others over the question of religious authority for the respective Muslim communities. Here we just need to recall the examples of the Fédération Nationale des Musulmans de France [National Federation of the Muslims of France] versus the Conseil Français du Culte Musulman [French Council for the Muslim Religion] in France, the Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland [Central Council of Muslims in Germany] versus the Islamrat für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland [Islamic Council] in Germany, or the examples of the All-India Muslim majlis-i mushâwarat and the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board in India.[25]

These examples indicate that the case of India is by no means unique when it comes to the problem of Muslim religious education. We have analytically filtered out at least three structural features that

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based on that, the evolution of a clergy. In the Sunnî context, it seems meaningful to follow Wilfred Cantwell Smith in labeling the endeavors to set up '[a religion's] officially recognized and established practices' (Smith 1946: 305) as 'orthopraxy.' Moreover, this corresponds with the original meaning of the Arabic word *sunna*, meaning 'a way or manner of acting,' which in the early Islamic period came to stand for 'a generally approved standard or practice introduced by the Prophet as well as by the Pious Elders, the *salaf sâlih*.'

[25] On the French example, cf. Hussain (2003: 223–226); Amiraux (2003); Frégosi (2004: 132–135); on the German example, cf. Lemmen (2001: 120–128); on the Indian example, cf. Hartung (2003: 9–30).

have shaped the discourse on *madrasa* education in all the cases under investigation:

1. The religious minority status of Muslim communities in all these cases led to the Muslims' advocacy of a secular polity that could secure the unhindered execution of their religious duties in self-regulation. Their autonomy regarding religious education, in turn, posed the problem of conformity or non-conformity towards the valid constitutions of the respective states as the legal framework for the entire polity.
2. The inability of governments to provide primary education to every member of the polity, especially in developing countries, lead to the increasing popularity of *dînî madâris* for the economically disadvantaged portions of the Muslim population. The *dînî madâris* are, after all, supported from traditional sources within the Muslim community or by means of external funding, and can in this way offer free education for the economically weak as well as regular salaries for the teaching staff. This feature in turn threatens the state's monopoly on education and moreover fosters the fear of the authorities against foreign interests intruding in their dominion.
3. The lack of a central religious authority—at least in Sunnî Islam—leaves a certain vacuum in defining standards of religious education considered binding for all members of the Muslim community. With regard to the secular state, there is no competent and legitimate authority, which can function as interlocutor between the state and the religious community; the state is thus left more or less alone with decisions about the treatment of Islam and Muslims within its legal framework.

II

How can states like India extricate themselves from the dilemma of the Muslim educational system in Muslim minority societies as outlined earlier? Was a solution offered by the public media and political authorities, beyond their repeated allegations that *dînî madâris* would provide a fertile ground for radical and even militant ideas? Indeed, in almost the same breath as the allegations they demanded sudden reforms of the *madâris* and the whole *madrasa* system in India, but remained blithely vague about what they would consider to be

appropriate reforms. Thus it now seems quite prudent to start a more thorough investigation into the ideas of reforming Muslim religious education from a more general and analytical point of view before outlining the scope of the present volume.

If we follow the current discourse on 'reform' and 'reformism,' we gain the impression that there is a common understanding of these terms in reference to modernization and, as its ultimate political goal, to democratization. This perception is clearly supported by the arguments of the US authorities and their allies in favor of their invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq post-9/11. The boastfully announced 'Global War on Terrorism' seems to have served only as initial argument, but was soon replaced by the demand for democratic structures in both the invaded countries. Indeed, it might still serve as an argument for possible further military operations.

The historical evidence provided by the Napoleonic wars at the turn of the 19th century, or the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan between 1979 and 1989, shows that it is already a logical fallacy to force someone to freedom—a fact already pointed out in Johann Gottlieb Fichte's *Reden an die deutsche Nation* [Addresses to the German Nation] from 1807/1808.[26] The idea of a necessary coherence between reform, progress, modernization and democratization has a long-standing tradition in US–American social theory, at least since the influential works of Talcott Parsons in the 1930s. The respective governments moreover, frequently used it as an academic justification for political decisions.[27] The axiomatic assumption of the modernization theorists, due to a highly selective reading of early European sociologists like Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, leads to the conclusion that modernization —the development from simple and rather segmented agrarian societies towards highly complex industrial societies—is characterized by structural and functional differentiation. The historical development of the *madrasa* might present precisely such an example of modernization processes in Muslim societies.

After all, the *madrasa* as a distinct institution developed somewhere around the 11th century AD in the course of social differentiation,

[26] Cf. Fichte (1968).

[27] Even though Samuel Huntington's very eloquently presented hypothesis of the 'Clash of Civilizations' seems to dominate the political discourse in the United States post-9/11, one should not underestimate the still impressive influence of Modernization Theory.

and was accompanied by the emergence of the *'ulamâ'*, a functional group whose task was the administration and dissemination of religious knowledge. *Madâris* owed their historical development to the fact that after the death of the Prophet Muhammad a number of academic disciplines emerged, all of which aimed at properly understanding God's final revelation, now that the direct communication between 'sender' and 'receiver' of the revelation had ceased.

The first of these disciplines to be named here are the sciences of the Prophet's tradition, the *'ulûm al-hadîth*, which engaged in the collection, arrangement and investigation into the reliability of the traditions and their transmitters. From here it was just a short step to the development of the science of Islamic jurisprudence and its methodology, *fiqh* and *usûl al-fiqh*, around the 9th century AD, and from there to the emergence of a number of schools of law [*madhâhib al-fiqh*], five of which became canonical a short time later. By that time religious knowledge had already been differentiated into several scientific branches—every single one with its own methodical tools and even with its own language. This differentiation increased to such an extent that it became almost impossible for a student to comprehend all these kinds of knowledge without professional guidance. Here we can see the evolution of the *madrasa* proceeding from the study circles in mainly non-congregational mosques, lodges for students from abroad [*khân*] which were attached to these mosques later on, and the library, in the legacy of the Hellenic and Hellenist academies. Finally, the Madrasa Nizâmiyya, consecrated in 1067 AD in Baghdad under the patronage of the Saljuq *wazîr* Nizâm al-Mulk (d. 1092), which is considered the first proper *madrasa*,[28] was built for the renowned Shâfi'ite scholar Abû Ishâq ash-Shîrâzî (d. 1083).[29]

The insight we can derive from this rather superficial treatment of a very complex historical development is that the evolution of *madâris* seems to fit perfectly into the above-mentioned paradigm of modernization. Later developments in regard to the *madrasa* seem to confirm the process of structural and functional differentiation of society as

[28] However there existed earlier *madâris* in Khurasan and Transoxania. All of them had the feature in common that they were set up by either a scholar belonging to a particular school of law, or by a patron for one scholar who was to teach the tradition of his particular school of law. Cf. Makdisi (1981: 1–6); Pedersen and Makdisi (1986: 1126).

[29] Cf. Makdisi (1981: 30–32 *et passim*).

well: the professional *'ulamâ'* started to form subgroups due to the further differentiation and elaboration of religious knowledge. We see the development of the *mufassirûn* (scholars specialized in the exegesis of the Qur'ân) and the *muhaddithûn* (scholars specialized in the sciences of *hadîth*); we then see the emergence of scholars entirely devoted to Islamic law, the *fuqahâ'*, who very soon started to functionally differentiate themselves even further into the judge [*qâdî*] and the jurisconsultant [*muftî*], which are only two professional specialists from within the realm of religious jurisprudence to be named here.[30]

Additionally, another aspect is related to the institution of the *madrasa* itself, which can be viewed as a contribution to a process of modernization in Muslim societies. What we have in mind here is the question of funding *madâris* by means of religious endowments, *awqâf*, by which the academic community around a *madrasa* secures—at least ideally—economical and thus intellectual autonomy from the political establishment. Scholars like Toby E. Huff have denied the existence of the legal concept of the autonomous corporation in Muslim societies, which concept has, according to them, provided the institutional framework for the development of modern (i.e. natural) sciences, thus leading to the Enlightenment in Europe.[31] Against such opinions we have argued elsewhere that especially the concept of *waqf*—inseparably and substantially linked to the institution of the *madrasa*—provided a framework for the emergence of a Civil Society, or, at least, an analogy to the so-called 'Third Sector.'[32] Civil Society, in turn, is considered by leading democracy theorists like Jürgen Habermas as a marker as well as an inevitable condition for democracy, which is seen as the goal of reform and modernization by its theorists, as outlined earlier.

Bearing in mind what has been said so far, we must conclude that those who have accused Indian *dînî madâris* of being breeding grounds for Muslim militancy and who have demanded immediate reforms, seem to have something else in mind when speaking of 'reform.' This leads us to a second consideration on that matter, namely the autochthonous Islamic concept of reform [*islâh*]. The concept itself is rooted in the Qur'ânic revelation, where it is referred to as a deed that leads to peace,

30 It goes without saying that the list of different specialists for certain branches of religious knowledge can by no means claim to be complete; it is just designed to illustrate the argument of functional differentiation among the *'ulamâ'*.

31 Cf. Huff (1993: 79–90, 119–148, 218–220).

32 Cf. Hartung (2004: 308–312).

harmony, and reconciliation [*sulh*]—in other words a deed that is oriented towards the common good [*maslaha*]. God clearly says in the Qur'ân: 'He will never fail to reward those reformers who hold firm to the book and who establish the prayers,'[33] and, 'nor that your Lord destroys the communities for wrong-doing if its people were reformers.'[34] From these two quotations it should become apparent why *islâh* was very soon considered to be a religious obligation for believers, both individually [*fard ʻayn*] and collectively [*fard kifâya*]. This obligation becomes even more important when we consider that the Qur'ân is viewed as God's final revelation to Man. Thus, no subsequent prophet is to be expected to reform the religion by receiving a new revelation. The almost natural consequence of this is that Muslims consider all the acknowledged prophets to be reformers, but Muhammad, in turn, leads all the reformers as the 'reformer *par excellence*' [*al-muslih al-aʻzam*]. Apart from that, it also follows that reform always has to take place in harmony with the text of God's final revelation. Any other attempt will not lead to reformation, but to 'unauthorized and blameworthy innovation' [*bidʻa*], the prevalence of which is expressed in social and political crises and rooted in moral deviations.

To sum up all these points, we can see that this distinct and authentically grounded notion of reform constitutes a permanent feature in Islamic history. Every upright Muslim, over and above the intellectual elite, is at all times called upon to strive for conformity with the implications of the authentic sources and to eliminate *bidʻa* whenever and wherever it is detected. To be able to locate *bidʻa*, in turn, one needs proper knowledge of the revelation, knowledge that was and still is mainly imparted by *ʻulamâ'* in the *madâris*.

Now, it is not a truly revolutionary insight that the notion of *bidʻa* differs geographically and temporally. That is why we may detect different reformist approaches at different times and in different places. The above-mentioned lack of a central religious authority for the Muslim *umma* is to a large extent responsible for the fact that we are able to witness different, and sometimes even diametrically opposed, approaches towards reform in one and the same geographical and temporal context. These approaches are all to be considered equally valid,

[33] Qur'ân 7:170: *wa-lladhîna yumassikûna bi-l-kitâbi wa-aqâmû s-salawâta 'innâ lâ nudîʻu ajra l-muslihîn*. All translations from the Qur'ân are mine.
[34] Qur'ân 11:117: *wa-mâ kâna rabbuka li-yuhlika l-qurâ bi-zulmin wa-ahluhâ muslihûn*.

as long as they go back to the authentic sources, have sincere intentions, and seek to eradicate *bid‘a* for the common good. Thus it becomes understandable why the endeavors of Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhâb in what is today Saudi Arabia, of Shâh Walî Allâh (d. 1762) of Delhi, of ‘Uthmân dan Fodio (d. 1817) in today's Nigeria—all of them in the 18th century—or the efforts made by Muhammad ‘Abduh (d. 1905) in 19th-century Egypt and by ‘Abd ar-Rahmân al-Kawâkibî (d. 1903) at around the same time in Syria can be similarly perceived as attempts at religious reforms, even though they differ quite drastically from each other in their respective approaches to solving social and political crises, in terms of what they perceived the circumstances of their respective times and locations.[35] In regard to South Asia it also becomes clear why Muslim religious scholarly movements—the Ahl-i hadîth, the Deobandîs, the Barelwîs, the ‘Alîgarh movement, or the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’, just to name the most well-known—have likewise to be perceived as reform movements in the aftermath of the upheaval of 1857. Here, our argument finally comes full circle, since public demand for reforms of Muslim religious educational institutions in India post-9/11 was directed almost exclusively at Muslim educational movements and institutions, which already consider themselves to be primarily and substantially reform-oriented. It should, therefore, not be surprising that the public demands for reforms were initially met with astonishment by those involved in *madrasa* education in India, prominently by the Deobandîs. We attempted to show that the question of the reform of *madâris* seems to have actually been seen as self-contradictory, since—at least from a historical point of view—it is assumed that Islam, *per se*, is essentially reformist; after all, it extensively renewed the prevailing religious practices based on, as is firmly believed by Muslims, earlier revelations altered and distorted by Man.[36]

[35] For a comparative perspective on the endeavors of the mentioned reformers of the 18th century, cf. Dallal (1993: 343–355). For the efforts of ‘Abduh and al-Kawâkibî, cf. Hourani (1962: 130–160, 271–273).

[36] This perception is authentically grounded in a number of Qur’ânic verses, e.g. 3:78: 'And among them [the people of the book] is a group which turns its tongues to [produce] the Book for that you regard it as the Book, but it is not the Book, and that you think it is from God, but it is not from God. [They say:] "It is from God." [It is a] lie and they know it' [*wa-’inna minhum la-farîqan yalwûna ’alsinatahum bi-l-kitâbi li-tahsabûhu mina l-kitâbi wa-mâ huwa mina l-kitâbi wa-yaqûlûna huwa min ‘indi llâhi wa-mâ huwa min ‘indi llâhi wa-yaqûlûna ‘alâ llâhi l-kadhiba wa-hum ya‘lamûna*].

If the whole of Islam is reformist, so must all of its parts—prominent among them religious knowledge—likewise be. It might be because of this viewpoint that the call for reforms of the *dînî madâris* came somewhat out of the blue for the protagonists of these educational institutions. Nevertheless, submitting to public pressure, some rather cosmetic changes were introduced in the larger *dînî madâris* and public relations were improved for the sake of greater transparency. However, the demands for reforms did not diminish. This leads to the conclusion that those who publicly called for the reforms likely had ulterior motives, which have—perhaps even on purpose—never been clearly exposed.

Bearing in mind that religious knowledge, as an inseparable part of Islam, is intrinsically reformist, a reform of *dînî madâris* in terms of contents of instruction can only be meaningful if the notion of knowledge is altered. This seems to be the inevitable precondition for enlarging the historically developed canon of subjects taught at the *madâris*, by incorporating not only the so-called 'transmitted sciences' [*manqûlât*] and 'rational sciences' [*ma'qûlât*][37] but also disciplines formerly alien to an Islamic system of science. However, the question remains whether modern (i.e. Western-style) natural science, post-Enlightenment philosophy, social sciences (such as sociology and modern economics), Western languages (other than English as one of the official administrative languages of the Indian Republic), and finally computer science will find their place within the heretofore clearly defined framework of Islamic knowledge. Recent history provides evidence of numerous attempts by Muslim scholars and intellectuals to find arguments in favor of the inclusion of such disciplines into the curricula of *madâris*. Thinkers like Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khân (d. 1899) and Shiblî Nu'mânî (d. 1914) in 19th-century India have laid the

[37] The *manqûlât*, defined by the fact that they owe their existence solely to Islam, usually consist of Qur'ânic exegesis [*tafsîr*], the sciences of the Prophetic tradition [*'ulûm al-hadîth*], jurisprudence [*fiqh*] and the methodology of jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*]. They include theology [*kalâm*] only insofar as it is considered an elaboration of dogmatics [*tawhîd/ aqâ'id*]. In contrast to this, the *ma'qûlât* owe much of their existence to the broad reception of Hellenic and Hellenist, Nestorian, and Judaic scientific traditions in the early Islamic era. They consist primarily of logic [*mantiq*], philosophy [*falsafa*/*hikma*], mathematics [*riyâdiyyât*], astromomy [*hay'a*/*falakiyyât*], and medicine [*tibb*]. Theology [*kalâm*] is included here because of the dialectical method borrowed from logic and philosophy. Cf. Pedersen and Makdisi (1986: 1130).

foundations for such considerations by trying to show that there is no contradiction at all between modern sciences and the Qur'ânic revelation.[38] Such considerations were consciously received and followed up by thinkers like Tantâwî Jawharî (d. 1940) and Mustafâ Mahmûd (b. 1921) in Egypt within the perspective of their particular interpretation of the revealed text.

However such attempts have always been contested by a considerable part of the community of religious scholars. The example of Jamâl ad-Dîn al-Afghânî (d. 1897), who turned out to be one of the fiercest critics of Sayyid Ahmad Khân's approach towards the authentic sources, is well known. The same issue arose with the confirmation of the geocentric worldview by the former Grand-*muftî* of Saudi Arabia, ʻAbd al-ʻAzîz b. Bâz (d. 1999) in a newspaper article in as late as 1966.[39] Looking at the Indian scene, we find continued dispute between almost all the above-mentioned religious scholarly reform movements that evolved in the aftermath of 1857: Deobandîs versus Ahl-i hadîth, Deobandîs versus Barelwîs, Nadwîs versus Barelwîs, Ahl-i hadîth versus Barelwîs, Deobandîs versus ʻAlîgarhîs, and so on and so forth.[40] Just to add to the possible confusion, younger Islamic movements, such as the Jamâʻat-i islâmî, provide yet another highly important approach towards religious education which is often severely contested by the representatives of the traditional *ʻulamâ'* for a number of reasons which have been broadly discussed by a number of authors in the last decade and which we will omit here. Once again, what needs to be emphasized at this point is that in our eyes these inner-Islamic controversies owe their existence to the fact that each perception of religious reformist education is considered exclusively valid by its adherents as long as an identifiable backing from conventional sources of Islam can be derived. A final decision in favor of one approach and to the disadvantage of all the others cannot be made because of the absence of a central religious authority with the capacity to make such

[38] Cf. e.g. Troll (1978).

[39] On this text, entitled *The Sun Runs and the Earth is Fixed* [*ash-shams jâriya wa-l-ʻard thâbita*] and published in *al-Bilâd* (Jiddah) on Ramadân 20, 1385/ January 12, 1966, cf. Ende (1982: 382–385).

[40] I did not mention the of course very important conflict along the Sunnî-Shîʻa lines, which is reflected in contemporary disputes on Muslim religious education as well, since this conflict has deeper historical roots, which are not in the first place based on opposing notions of knowledge and science.

a decision. What initially appears to be open conflict is to some extent mitigated by the fact that all the different approaches to Muslim religious education, embodied in their respective movements and educational institutions, consider themselves as 'paths' [*masâlik*/sg.: *maslak*] rather than exclusive 'sects' [*firaq*/sg.: *firqa*]. This *terminus technicus*, prominently used in the Sufi context for the spiritual sojourn of the seeker of God, acknowledges the parallel existence of more or less equally valid approaches to the truth (as the ultimate goal of the search for religious knowledge), despite the obvious polemic arguments.[41]

The apparent conclusion from the above, however, is that those who publicly demand reforms of the *dînî madâris* in India need to take into account the diversity of approaches and opinions regarding Muslim religious education existing within the Muslim community. Whether this diversity is advantageous rather than an obstacle to an aspired process of liberalization-cum-democratization, or whether such a process rather requires a homogenization of differences and internal conflicts in the Indian context is not for us to decide. Thus, the present volume does not aim at providing solutions, or even recommendations, for the Indian government regarding how it should deal with the particular situation of Muslim religious education and its institutions in the Indian Republic. Instead, it should be considered a survey on the phenomenon '*madrasa* education in India' from various angles, in view of the recently intensified interest in the subject related to the political developments in the aftermath of 9/11.

III

As already pointed out in the preface to this volume, the overwhelming majority of the contributions collated here result from a conference of the same name, which was initiated, organized and realized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Germany. As part of the foundation's own special program 'Dialogue with Islam,' which started in summer 2002, it fit in perfectly another program of this kind, the 'European-Islamic Intercultural Dialogue,' initiated by the Federal Foreign Office

[41] The term *maslak* resembles, so to speak, the notion of *madhhab*, which is almost exclusively used to denote the so-called canonical schools of Islamic law. Both terms derive from Arabic roots referring to a progressive movement (i.e. *salaka* = to walk along, or to follow a path; *dhahaba* = to walk, or to go to somewhere).

of Germany in March 2002. Of course, both programs owe their inception to the tragic events of 9/11 and the resulting bewilderment of large sections of the Western public in general and the German public in particular. It was felt that especially after these events the dialogue with all willing forces in the Muslim world needed to be reinforced considerably, on the one hand in order to provide elucidation of the innumerable varieties of Islam to a wider Western audience, in order to counteract the dangers of confining Islam to its militant variant only. However, on the other hand the dialogue with representatives of a multitude of views from within the Muslim communities all over the world also aims at the prevention of potential and actual conflicts between Muslims and the West, a scenario repeatedly predicted by Samuel Huntington since 1993.[42]

From the stated objectives of the 'Dialogue with Islam' program it becomes understandable why the organizers did not just invite a number of academics, both Western and Indian, to discuss the core-issue of the conference. Almost half the participants belonged to the higher echelons of Indian *dînî madâris*, or were at least to some extent affiliated with these Muslim religious educational institutions. Moreover, the organizers of the conference managed to ensure the participation of the former commissioner for the 'Dialogue with the Islamic World' of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, Ambassador Dr Günter Mulack, which helped relocate the whole conference to a wider frame. However, such a diversity of participants, which was highly appreciated for the lively discussions during the three days of the conference, also posed some problems for the editor of the present volume.

The conference attempted to work out a compromise between scientific aspiration on the one side and personal commitment on the other. Despite continued attempts this compromise might not have been achieved in every single case. However, this fact should not be perceived as a failure but rather as an expression of the actuality as well as the actuality of the issue of 'Madrasa Education in India Post-9/11' that does not allow one-sided approaches. Neither approach, be it the rather distanced scientific one or the more emotional one, is owed to a personal proximity to the matter. Therefore, we firmly believe that the present volume has been enriched by the variety and differences of approaches to the issue.

[42] Cf. Huntington (1993).

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The four chapters in the first part of the book contribute to an understanding of the phenomenon '*madrasa* in India' by approaching it from a historical perspective. However, not all of them are mere scientific outlines of the historical development of this particular kind of institution in the sub-continent. Already the title of the first chapter by Saiyid Naqi Husain Jafri unveils that he is committed to portraits of some aspects of the history of the *dînî madrasa* in India from a certain perspective, namely that of an ardent modernist. He attempts to figure out the historical reasons responsible for today's negative image of the *dînî madâris* in India, which has so far culminated in the above-mentioned allegations against them as breeding grounds of Muslim militant activities. His chapter touches upon the question of royal patronage in Mughal India, which depended to a large extent on the services the *madâris* could provide for the state administration as well as for the satisfaction of the rather arbitrary personal interests of the respective monarch. In a cursory comparison with the situation of Muslim religious education in the other two of the so-called 'Gunpowder Empires,' the Safawids in Iran and the Ottomans in Anatolia and the Middle East, he points towards possible omissions in the reform of the teaching canons in order to meet the needs of the day and thus remain competitive with other educational systems, over and above those of the Europeans. According to Jafri, all of this led to an increase of the widening gap between pretension and reality after the independence of India from British colonial rule in 1947, since the restriction to religious subjects taught in the *madâris* led to them becoming even more alienated from the social praxis in a nominally secular polity.

The first clash between the traditional religious education imparted in the *madrasa* and alternative educational systems that seemed more appropriate to serve the requirements of the entire society occurred in the colonial period. Farhat Hasan shows in his contribution that, despite some justified critique of the state of education in the *madrasa*, this particular institution was singled out by the brains of British colonialism as a means in a process that came to be known as 'Orientalism': the construction of the colonized 'other' as essentially backward and, therefore, in urgent need of a helping hand by the colonizers to bring them up-to-date. On the other hand, Hasan sheds some light on the inner-Islamic controversies on education in the 19th century that eventually proved rather counterproductive in dealing

with the predicament the *dînî madâris* faced during the colonial period.

The contribution of Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri also deals to a large extent with the colonial period. He gives a meticulous account of how the *khânaqâh*, as the most widespread kind of Muslim religious educational institution in India in the past, was challenged by the colonial administration as well as the so-called 'reformist' educational movements of the second half of the 19th century, using the example of the Sufi hospice-cum-*madrasa* at Salon in today's state of Uttar Pradesh. These challenges included above all the Ahl-i hadîth—known for their fierce rejection of Sufism in its entirety—and the Deobandîs in all their different shades, who advocated only a certain purist kind of Sufism that had totally lost its historically widespread relation to the *khânaqâh*.

The last chapter in the first part is an important contribution to the entire volume because it is the only chapter that gives justice to the Shî'ite denomination among the Indian Muslims, otherwise criminally neglected throughout the book. Syed Najmul Raza Rizvi provides some very valuable insights into the Shî'ite educational system in general, particularly the historical development of a Shî'ite *madrasa* system in the north Indian principality of Awadh, which proved to be one of the most important localities in the sub-continent for Shî'ite scholarship in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Finally, he outlines current developments in the *madrasa* system of the Shî'a in Lucknow, using the example of three different *madâris*. Two detailed appendices, containing the syllabi of the two major Shî'a *madâris* in Lucknow, round off this chapter.

The second part of the present book aims at providing 'regional perspectives' of *madrasa* education in India. As it goes without saying that *dînî madâris* took, and still take, different paths of development in different regions of the vast country, this part is a rather hybrid one, belonging to the historical part as well as to the contemporary part. As such, it legitimately stands between the two other parts. The first chapter in this part is our own attempt to prove the interrelatedness of large parts of Indian *madrasa* education with their Middle Eastern counterparts, using the example of the Nadwat al-'ulamâ', the 'National Council of (Sunnî) Muslim Religious Scholars,' inaugurated in the late 19th century in order to overcome the internal quarrel between almost all the renowned *masâlik*. It is shown that scholars of especially this institution have, from its inception until today, played a vital role in transnationalizing contemporary Indo-Muslim scholarship, and thus in

bringing regional issues of Muslim religious education into a wider frame. On the other hand, it was of course not least this intimacy with Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia that has been a thorn in the side of the Indian state authorities and has repeatedly served them in recent years to conduct questionable and semi-legal actions against the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’, its students and its leading representatives.

Paul Jackson, S.J., has to go back into history before being able to touch upon current developments in *madrasa* education in the north-eastern state of Bihar. He highlights themes that have been at the core of other papers, among others the role of Sufi hospices in the development of a *madrasa* system in Bihar. In those parts where he discusses current developments, he draws from the results of fact-finding surveys conducted only recently by the government as well as by concerned citizens of the region. Finally, Jackson depicts an attempt by Indian Jesuit students to enter into a fruitful encounter with students and staff from *dînî madâris*, exchanging their respective experiences, thus contributing to the gradual removal of mutual prejudices.

Arshad Alam's chapter is a fascinating account of his recently conducted fieldwork in a Deobandî *madrasa* in Bodh Gaya, Bihar. He shows how and why, and for which social groups, this particular *maslak* proves successful in competition to other *masâlik* that prevail in the area. Moreover, his chapter discusses techniques used in this *madrasa* to reinforce the development of what Pierre Bourdieu has called 'habitus.'

The last chapter in this part has to be awarded equal credit with Syed Najmul Raza Rizvi's chapter on the Shî‘a *madâris* of Awadh, since it provides us with insight into a region otherwise ignored throughout the entire volume. Torsten Tschacher takes us into the southern state of Tamil Nadu, where *madrasa* education had developed in a way quite different from the north. His thoroughly researched case study of the town of Kilakkarai and its two contemporary *madâris* is of extraordinary importance, because it shows a flexibility to adapt to modern circumstances without being forced to give up Muslim religious identity as well as Muslim religious education: a 'middle way' that seems not—or at the most only marginally—to exist in the north.

Finally, the third part is entirely concerned with current developments and draws its insights largely from recently conducted fieldwork. Moreover, it highlights a number of important issues that have been rather neglected by the chapters in the first two parts. The joint contribution of Patricia Jeffery, Roger Jeffery and Craig Jeffrey, for

example, does some justice to the question of girl's education in the *madrasa* system, and thus brings in a gender perspective necessary for an understanding of contemporary *madrasa* education in India as a whole. Using interviews conducted with male administrators and teaching staff of *dînî madâris* in Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, on the question of girl's education in the *madrasa*, this chapter challenges the common perception (as widely spread by prevailing prejudices) that *madrasa* education is essentially promoting an intolerant and masculinist idea of Islam. The extensive quotes from the interviews provide ample evidence for the fact that the crucial importance of religious education of girls for the entire Muslim community is almost unanimously conceded by the male Muslim interlocutors.

A considerable part of the chapter by Mareike Jule Winkelmann goes in a similar direction. Even though she sets out from an account on the allegations against *dînî madâris* in the Indian public media after 9/11, Winkelmann highlights the Muslim reactions to this media discourse using the example of four different reformist *madâris*, providing a retort to the widespread pronouncement that *madrasa* education is essentially inflexible and resistant to change in educational approaches and syllabi. One of the discussed *madâris* is a girl's college in New Delhi affiliated with the Ahl-i hadîth, which is in turn considered one of the most conservative and even reactionary of the prevailing scholarly traditions in India today. This chapter clearly indicates that there is not necessarily a causal relationship between a certain *maslak* and the rejection or the appreciation of new approaches to education within the frame of the *madrasa* as an institution of Muslim religious learning.

Finally, Yoginder Sikand provides a challenge to the general perception of Deobandî scholarship as a homogeneous bloc. The example of the Delhi-based Tanzîm abnâ’ al-qadîm—the Old Boys' Association of the Deobandî *madâris*—clearly shows the heated internal debates on reforms in the Deobandî *madrasa* system, and thus provides evidence for the fact that even within this *maslak*, which has been at the core of the post-9/11 allegations, there are certain forces not essentially opposed to internal reform within a given frame.

The rather positive outlook provided by all the chapters in this part is complemented by a brief activity report by Syed Abul Hashim Rizvi, currently director of the 'Centre for Promotion of Science' which is affiliated to ‘Alîgarh Muslim University. This report, preceded by a short editorial note as an introduction, clearly indicates a widespread positive response of administrators and teaching staff of *dînî madâris* in India to the activities of the center, which aim in the long run at the

creation of a consciousness to introduce courses on modern natural sciences in the *madrasa* curricula. This positive response shows that there is by no means an intrinsic opposition of the *'ulamâ'* against the inclusion of modern disciplines into the curricula of *dînî madâris* as long as they do not conflict with the basic tenets of Islamic beliefs.

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To summarize, it can be said that the outlook on *madrasa* education in India post-9/11 provided from a variety of angles by the chapters collected in this volume is not at all a pessimistic one. The volume provides information on the multi-faceted history of the Indian *madrasa*, gives an idea of its immense regional variety, and, finally, shows that—despite a number of problems which have not been sought to be disguised—there is definitely internal discussion within the field of *madrasa* education that might lead to changes, however timid. This contradicts all the allegations against this particular kind of religious educational institution that arose from different quarters, especially after 9/11. In this respect the hopes for a reform of the *dînî madrasa* in India from within, voiced by Ambassador Gunter Mulack in his afterword to this volume, might indeed find its fulfillment in the future.

Note on Transliteration

It is deemed appropriate to add a few words on the system of transliteration used in this volume, because it obviously deviates to some extent from the transliteration system which readers, especially those in the Indian subcontinent, are used to. As this volume intends to be considered a serious academic publication of international standard we have decided not to abstain from transliteration. However, since not only Urdu and Hindi have been used as source languages, but also Arabic, Persian, and—in one case—even Tamil, we have had to work out a compromise between the internationally acknowledged systems of transliteration for each of these languages. Therefore, we have oriented ourselves roughly towards the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Bosworth et al. 1960–2002) which can be considered a major reference work in scholarship concerned with Islam, even though we have omitted most of the diacritics for the sake of better readability.

Moreover, for the sake of consistency we have decided to use the proper Arabic plural form for words that have derived from the Arabic, since these forms have been lexicalized in Persian as well as in Urdu.

Finally, for the transcription of Hindi words, we have roughly used the system of Ronald Stuart McGregor's *Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary* (1993) as a guideline.

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Part I

Historical Perspectives

1

A Modernist View of *Madrasa* Education in Late Mughal India

SAIYID NAQI HUSAIN JAFRI

MADRASA—NURSERY OF CIVIL SERVICE IN INDIA FROM LATE MUGHAL TIMES TO INDEPENDENCE

A scholar [*'âlim*/ pl.: *'ulamâ'*] or graduate from a traditional *madrasa* in the subcontinent, while proficient in revealed knowledge, principles of jurisprudence and aware of some disciplines like logic and history of Islam, is not generally conscious of the civilizational strides which have contributed to the making of the modern sensibility. The *dînî madâris*, as traditional Muslim educational institutions, have nevertheless served as a nursery of the civil service in Mughal India, as they produced the jurisconsultant [*muftî*] and the judge [*qâdî*/pl.: *qudât*], the two offices for which the *madrasa* graduates qualified, and which were considered high civil offices in society.[1] That seems to indicate a preference for principles of jurisprudence and Islamic law [*fiqh*] in curricula of *dînî madâris* during this period.

Also, in the actual regional successor-states of the Mughal empire, most prominently in North Indian Awadh, Muslim religious scholarship was entrusted with the task of producing graduates that could be integrated into their state administration. In this regard, the school of the Farangî Mahall in Lucknow deserves to be mentioned.[2]

[1] As an example might serve the fact that during the reign of the last Great Mughal emperor Awrangzeb 'Âlamgîr (reigned 1658–1707) high-ranking *'ulamâ'* were employed to compile and standardize prevailing formal legal opinions [*fatâwâ*/sg.: *fatwâ*] into the most comprehensive collection of legal opinions in India, the *Fatâwâ-yi 'Alamgîrî*.

[2] Even though the *nawwâb*s of Awadh never refused to recognize the sovereignty of the Mughal ruler over their dominion, they became *de facto* more and more

In the aftermath of the uprising in 1857, however, the British East India Company [EIC] removed the legal anomaly which recognized the Mughal emperor Sirâj ad-Dîn Bahâdur 'Shâh ‘Âlam II' (d. 1858) as a *de jure* ruler while the EIC constituted the *de facto* government. Even though this put an end to the sponsorship of Muslim scholars by the Mughal court, the EIC followed in its footsteps by continuing to employ *madrasa* graduates in the civil service of their Crown colony.

However, the end of state patronage over Muslim religious educational institutions and the virtual dissolution of the religious revenue system [*awqâf*/sg.: *waqf*] by the colonial administration in the second half of the 19th century[3] led to the establishment of a number of *madâris* independent from the state, which cater to particular ideologies and frameworks [*masâlik*/sg.: *maslak*] and which expect its graduates not to deviate from their allotted role.

This stiffening of an inner-Islamic controversy made it difficult for the British colonial administration to evaluate the usability of *madrasa* graduates for the civil service. Moreover, the affinity of some *masâlik* to Muslim reformist movements in the Middle East, namely to the *Wahhâbiyya* on the Arab peninsula and the *Salafiyya* in Egypt and Syria, aroused suspicion among the EIC officials. Relations with the *Wahhâbiyya* proved to be especially fatal for Indo-Muslim scholars—for the British the military successes of the Arabian movement in the early 19th century linked it to the ideas of armed *jihâd* and the over-simplified dichotomy of the 'abode of Islam' [*dâr al-islâm*] vs. the 'abode of war' [*dâr al-harb*], and were responsible for the application of this term to similar activities in British India. The labeling of Muslim religious movements which were regarded as disloyal to the Crown as 'Wahhâbî'[4] was not without its effect on Muslim intellectual elites—they began to adopt the term to designate streams within the community of *‘ulamâ’* which vehemently protested against local customs and

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independent from the court in Delhi. Cf. Alam (1997: 47–73). On the Farangî Mahall and its role for the *nawwâbî* state administration in Awadh, cf. Robinson (2001).

[3] Cf. Kozlowski (1985: 21–32).

[4] Indeed, according to William W. Hunter, an EIC official who was appointed in 1881 to conduct an Education Commission investigating into the state of education in India, what was called 'Wahhâbiyya' in South Asia was essentially an anti-British stance, and carried political rather than religious connotations. Cf. Hunter (1880: 40–77).

even against certain legal opinions that they considered unlawful innovations [*bid'a*].[5] The historical affinity of the movement of the Ahl-i hadîth—characterized by its strong opposition against the widespread veneration of saints and their graves as well as against the adherence to a particular 'school of Islamic law' [*madhhab al-fiqh*]—with the Arabian *Wahhâbiyya* made it easy to polemically apply the 'Wahhâbî' label to them.

The dispute between the Deobandîs and the Barelwîs—the latter adhering to their loyalty to Mawlânâ Ahmad Ridâ Khân (d. 1921)—over the legal question of the veneration of saints and their tombs moved the Deobandîs closer to the Ahl-i hadîth, and thus enabled the term 'Wahhâbî' to be applied to them too, despite the existence of a prolonged controversy between the Hanafite Deobandîs and the Ahl-i hadîth over a number of legal points.[6]

However, the British colonial administration was in some need of a Muslim religious educational institution that could serve them as a forge for cadres for the civil service. As such, they supported the establishment of a council of Muslim religious scholars that could serve as an umbrella organization by integrating all current streams of Muslim scholarship in India and conciliating their internal conflicts. The Nadwat al-'ulamâ', inaugurated in Kanpur in 1893, was at first believed to be such an institution, which is why the British took quite a number of the graduates of its *Dâr al-'ulûm*, established in Lucknow in 1908, into its civil service.[7]

[5] Cf. Hermansen (2000: 30–34). Here it needs to be taken into account that the *khânaqâh*-based *madâris* held a special position as the oldest and most widespread form of *madrasa* education right into the 19th century. Cf. the contribution of Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri to the present volume.

[6] It is felt that the purism of so-called Wahhâbî thought was not absent from the curriculum and broad outlines of the ideologues of the founders of the Dâr al-'ulûm at Deoband. However, I may submit that they can definitely not be called 'Wahhâbî' in the real sense of the word, because almost all the leading Deobandî-scholars had Sufi affiliations with the Chishtî-Sâbirî order, and in some cases with the Naqshbandîyya too. Mawlânâ Ahmad Ridâ Khân, while criticizing the basic tenets of the Deoband school, pejoratively labeled them 'Wahhâbîs,' without taking note of the fact that they never rejected the Sufic dimension of Islam, although they were critical of some Sufi practices, such as the performance of Sufi devotional songs [*samâ'*], and other practices in various *khânaqâh*s of the sub-continent, which they considered as *bid'a*.

[7] On the history of the Nadwat al-'ulamâ' and its role for *madrasa* education in contemporary India, cf. the contribution of Jan-Peter Hartung (Chapter 5) to the present volume.

Things changed dramatically with the beginning of the 'Indian Independence Movement' in the early 20th century. Leading *'ulamâ'* of whatever *maslak* actively took part in the 'Khilafat movement'; renowned Deobandî scholars draw nearer to the 'Congress movement' by setting up the 'Society of Indian Muslim Scholars,' the Jam'iyyat-i 'ulamâ'-i Hind. This way, they enjoyed a certain level of respectability as nationalist Muslims. For the British colonial administration, however, these developments put an end to the employment of *madrasa* graduates in the civil service.

The Problem after Independence

The employability and social status of the *madrasa* graduates has been narrowed even more after the independence of India from British rule in 1947. While in earlier times they had the option to aspire to the office of *muftî* or *qâdî*, in the present scenario, the office of the *qâdî* having been abolished in India, the only available position is that of a *muftî*, which is neither official nor secular. Today, quite a few of them join a *madrasa* or *Dâr al-'ulûm* as faculty; the larger number go to serve the mosques as leaders of the prayers [*imâm*] and preachers [*khatîb*]. Some graduates, however, are admitted to such institutions of higher learning as allow them to continue their education at the undergraduate level, like the universities of Lucknow and 'Alîgarh, the Jâmi'a milliyya islâmiyya in Delhi, and a few others. Rather significantly, *madrasa* graduates in the streams of humanities and social sciences do fairly well. It is when the knowledge of classical Arabic literature is profitably applied to modern disciplines that the graduates from *madâris* excel over their counterparts from government administered schools and colleges. But such instances are few. Even *madâris* which belong to modern *masâlik* do not seem to cater to the requirements of the Indian secular polity. Thus, for example, the Madrasat al-islâh at Sarâ'î Mîr, A'zamgarh—often called the nursery of the 20th century's religio-political movement, the Jamâ'at-i islâmî, in India—has been said to be an institution excelling in Qur'ânic knowledge,[8] but

[8] Mawlânâ Amîn Ahsân Islâhî (d. 1997), a graduate of the Madrasat al-islâh and former associate of Sayyid Abû l-A'lâ Mawdûdî (d. 1979), the founder of the Jamâ'at-i islâmî movement in undivided India, later differed with his master in regard to some of the basic interpretations of the Qur'ân. His own commentary on the Qur'ân, *Tadabbur al-qur'ân* [*Reflections on the Qur'ân*], differs on some

seems not to provide sufficient knowledge and practical skill demanded by the Indian state.

Mainly because of the emphasis on religious subjects in the syllabi, the majority of *madrasa* graduates do not get a chance to enter into university systems, and thus remain deprived of the benefits of liberal education in an emphatically secular state. It is by no means suggested that university graduates necessarily imbibe a liberal outlook and catholicity of approach, just as all the graduates of the *madrasa* system are not narrow-minded and conservative in approach. But it is expected that a university graduate who reads courses in humanities, social sciences, philosophy and modern natural sciences will have an open-minded approach and generally will not be indifferent and hostile to other systems of thought. The university system, now spread all over the world, has established its bonafides as the most viable and practical system of education, both for employability in the civil and financial domain and as a reservoir of knowledge that fosters free inquiry, tolerance and better understanding of the world around us. It is in this context that the *madrasa* graduates seem to be lagging behind and this often results in a siege mentality and near total alienation from society.

In another sense, and this is particularly true of the subcontinent, the *madrasa* graduates who eventually acquire leadership roles are better trusted by the overwhelming majority of Muslims in India than their counterparts from university systems. Muhammad ‘Alî Jinnâh (d. 1948), however, was an exception to the rule.[9] The majority of the Indo-Muslim leadership had gone through the *madrasa* system of education. Even today the representative bodies of Muslim leadership comprise mostly those who have graduated from *madâris* or possess some knowledge of Islamic systems of thought and are hesitant to deviate from the received opinions. However, it is our personal conviction that if those leaders happen to be backward-looking scripturalists devoid of any imagination and creative thought, they will not only misrepresent Islam but also mislead the community. Muslims in the

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of the basic issues as spelt out by Mawdûdî in his *Tafhîm al-qur'ân* [*Understanding of the Qur'ân*]. Apart from Amîn Ahsân Islâhî, two more graduates from the Madrasat al-islâh, Sadr ad-Dîn Islâhî (d. 1998) and Najatallâh Siddîqî Islâhî, have significantly contributed to the literary corpus of the Jamâ‘at-i islâmî.

[9] Even though Jinnâh obtained his barrister's degree from the Lincoln's Inn of Court in London, where he studied between 1894 and 1896, he also received his earlier education at the Madrasat al-islâm in Karachi.

sub-continent have generally been at the receiving end and in a disadvantaged position mainly because they have not been led by an able, imaginative and thoughtful leadership. Highly illustrative of this fact, the Jamâ'at-i islâmî in India did not for a long time permit its members and followers to participate in the general elections, calling the democratic system unholy and therefore unacceptable. Likewise, the Indian version of secularism as enshrined in its constitution was termed as not corresponding to the authoritative sources of Islam and therefore unacceptable.[10]

It may not be inappropriate to recall that the Indian *'ulamâ'* continued to debate the propriety of Western education and did not permit their children to study in schools and colleges for at least three generations after the coming of Western-model colleges in India.

Rather interestingly these retrograde measures were in total defiance of the teachings of the Qur'ân and the *ahâdîth*—it is nowhere suggested in the Qur'ân and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad that Muslims have to shun attending educational institutions which disseminate new knowledge. The Qur'ân exhorts the believers to ponder over the mysteries of the universe. There is a constant refrain in the Qur'ân to observe and study the phenomena of nature. The Prophet of Islam also exhorted Muslims to seek knowledge and made this obligatory for every child, female and male. The almost electrifying consciousness of knowledge and the stores of knowledge that were opened as a consequence of the translation work done at the cities of Damascus, Baghdad, Toledo, Granada, Cordoba, Monte Cassino (in Southern Italy), Bukhara, and Isfahan could not have been possible without the inspiration of the Qur'ân and the *ahâdîth*.

It is admitted that scholarly pursuits declined after the fall of Baghdad in 1258 AD. But before the sack of Baghdad by the Mongols, the famous medieval Muslim scholar Abû Hâmid Muhammad al-Ghazâlî (d. 1111), by refuting the relevance and usefulness of philosophy in understanding revealed knowledge, had in fact questioned rationality [*'aql*] as the foundation of philosophy as an academic discipline within the realm of religious education. He pleaded for reliance more on intuition [*kashf*] as a mode of understanding creation and revealed knowledge. The arguments of al-Ghazâlî were ostensibly focused in

[10] The leadership of the Jamâ'at-i islâmî of India changed their position only as late as 1967, 20 years after India became a democracy based on a secular constitution.

favour of revealed knowledge and its primacy, but were misconstrued by later scholars for the mere rejection of philosophy. There was no problem in probing and investigating secular disciplines from the paradigms of philosophy. It seems as if no clear distinction was made or construed between the dictates of revealed knowledge and secular sciences, a fault-line which continues to distract Muslim scholars, particularly in the *madâris* and *Diyâr al-'ulûm*.

By the time the Arab-Iranian legacy of scholarship reached the subcontinent, it had already lost its eminence of earlier times: The support of *hadîth*-centered traditionalism in the legacy of Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 855) since the reign of the Abbasid caliph Ja'far al-Mutawakkil (d. 861) put an end to the dominance of the rational theologies of the *Mu'tazila*, the *Ash'ariyya*, and, to some extent, the *Mâturîdiyya* in the eastern realm of the empire.[11] The spirit of free inquiry and empirical investigation had to quite some extent been replaced by literal interpretation [*taqlîd*] and strict adherence to the doctrines within the Islamic fold. One discovers a clear denominational divide from this time onwards. It had inevitably led to a consciousness of self-righteousness and rejection of the 'other.' Exegesis of the Qur'ân and collation and compilation of the literature of *hadîth* and the principles of jurisprudence however flourished with renewed vigor.

In the post-independence era the study of the so-called 'rational sciences' [*ma'qûlât*] has lost the focus it earlier had for considerable periods, and the curricula of the *madâris* shrank further. Today, there appear only sporadic engagements with matters affecting daily life, but the holistic approach as emphasized in Qur'ân and Prophetic *Sunna* vanished. It is against this backdrop that one may examine the legacy of the Mughal period in the context of education.

The Need for a Change in the Syllabi in Late Mughal Times

In the term '*madrasa* education' one may include advancement of knowledge and promotion of intellectual traditions as reflected in the

[11] For the sake of justice it needs to be said that the rationalist tendencies, especially those of Islamic philosophy and Mu'tazilite theology, have over the centuries and in a highly complex process been absorbed in Shî'ite systems of knowledge (cf. the contribution of Syed Najmul Raza Rizvi to the present volume). Thus, the process of traditionalization which we have outlined here belongs primarily to the Sunnite denomination of Islam.

curriculum of the *madâris*. Like their counterparts in the Ottoman Empire and Safawid Iran, the Mughals were also interested in the advancement of learning, which was expressed by the fact outlined earlier, that *madâris* often served as nurseries for the Mughal civil service. The interest of the Mughal rulers in the matter was reflected in the predominant systems of education, as well as in the priorities of the individual sovereigns, which finally set the criteria for royal patronage. While the *madrasa* curricula generally focussed on principles of jurisprudence and revealed knowledge, the ruling elite showed greater interest in fine arts, architecture, literature, jurisprudence, medicine, calligraphy, forms and designs of interior decoration, costumes, gastronomic refinements, pottery, horticulture and many other arts and crafts which contributed to the perfection of good life. Forging of metal and related industries were developed partly as a requirement of the military establishment.

However, in so far as reception of new ideas and technologies was concerned, the Mughals, as the following examples show, were not much interested. Akbar (reigned 1556–1605), after seeing the pages produced by the printing press and presented for the royal perusal by a delegation of Portuguese missionaries, is reported to have shown total lack of interest, as he found the pages printed by the machine unattractive as compared to the fine specimens of calligraphy.[12] In another instance, Emperor Jahângîr (reigned 1605–1627) showed similar indifference to a mechanical clock presented to him by the leader of the French royal delegation, while he highly appreciated the French paintings. He was, however, so charmed by these French paintings that he summoned the court painters and commissioned them to replicate the originals, which they had indeed managed, to the great admiration of the emperor. If Jahângîr had had shown a similar interest in the mechanical clock we could speculate that similar, if not even better, clocks would have been manufactured at imperial Agra. It may also be suggested that if Akbar had shown some interest in the printing press

[12] It has been outlined in various sources why it might have been that Muslims failed to adopt the letter-press until the 19th century. Cf. e.g. Robinson (2000: 68–75). It might, however, be enlightening to compare the Mughal attitude towards printing with the Ottomans'. Here the case of the letter-press was already positively considered in the early 18th century, when the Hungarian convert to Islam, Ibrahîm Müteferriqa (d. 1745), brought forth solely Islamic arguments for the introduction of printing to Sultan Ahmed III (reigned 1703–1730). Cf. Reichmuth (2001: 153–159).

it may also have been popularized in India long before its introduction in the 19th century.

These two instances have been cited only to suggest how the rulers and powers that be guided and shaped the priorities of a nation. Unlike the earlier examples of the centers of learning in Damascus and Baghdad, and later in Toledo, Granada and Cordoba, when Arabs mastered the Syriac, Greek and Coptic languages, the Muslims of later ages, particularly in Ottoman Turkey, Safawid Iran and Mughal India showed no, or at the most little, interest in acquiring any competence in foreign languages (in the present case, European languages).[13] How else could one explain the ignorance of Muslims throughout Asia, Africa and Europe about the epoch-making discoveries by Copernicus, Newton, Galileo and Kepler? The discoveries and inventions of these men were available in European languages, i.e. Italian, French, German, Spanish, and English. Latin continued to be the medium of scholarship, though the new treatises were also available in the developing vernacular languages. And, as suggested earlier, Muslims not acquainted with any of the European languages did not know the pace and scope of scientific thought. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khân's (d. 1898) treatise *Qawl al-matîn dar ibtâl-i harakat-i zamîn* [*Sound Argument in Refutation of the Theory of Revolution of the Earth*], published in 1854, is a case in point. After all, Sir Sayyid was one of the most well-read and well-informed persons of his age and quite favorably inclined to new ideas, and would not have written the said treatise if he had sufficient information on later scientific developments in the West. Indeed, he wrote this treatise only because Copernicus' works had not been translated into, or referred to, in Arabic and Persian languages until that time.

We learn from some of the recent studies that Mawlâwâ Tafaddul Husayn (d. 1800) of Lucknow translated Newton's *Principia* (1687) into Arabic in the late 18th century and was, thus, obviously familiar with progress in European science. It was during the period of the late 18th and early 19th centuries that, according to Robinson, 'Lucknow became a major intellectual centre training scholars who took pleasure in engaging with European science.'[14] This makes Sir Sayyid's treatise in

[13] It should be said that during the Mughal period a lively activity had set in to translate works from Indian languages into Persian. These texts, however, were primarily Hindu religious and philosophical texts, which do not deal with problems that arise from new developments in the fields of science and technology.
[14] Robinson (2001: 223).

defence of Ptolemy's geocentric theory even more enigmatic, even though he recanted his position by writing another treatise the following year, when one of his friends had brought the findings of Copernicus, empirically supported by Galileo, to his notice.

It seems that the corpus of rational sciences that developed during the 15th and 16th centuries in Europe was not, or at the most only scarcely, accessible to Muslim scholars at their respective centers of learning and was therefore not incorporated in their syllabi. There are historical reasons for the changes brought about by the scholars, but none of them can be justified. While in the 16th century Süleymân 'the Magnificent' in the Ottoman Empire (reigned 1520–1566), Shâh Ismâ‘îl in Safawid Iran (reigned 1502–1524) and Akbar in Mughal India were among the greatest rulers in the world at this time, their academic institutions had ceased to be pioneers in the advancement of knowledge and ideas. The situation did not change for another 200 years, i.e. until the close of the 18th century, by which time Europe had, due to the Enlightenment movements, acquired intellectual supremacy of the world. The East, including Mughal India, was now at the receiving end and had not much to offer in the promotion of learning and scholarship.

The Muslim Renaissance

Widespread consciousness of the advancement of knowledge in Europe came to the East via Egypt, but not earlier then its occupation by Napoleon in the first decade of the 19th century. It was only at this point of time that some inkling of the real dimensions of the European intellectual advancement appeared in Arabic. Muhammad ‘Alî Pâshâ, the ruler of Egypt between 1805 and 1849, showed keen interest in the technological progress of Europe and had planned to invite geologists from France who could identify places and regions in Egypt rich in mineral wealth. But it did not occur to the Egyptian ruler, according to the Pakistani physicist and Nobel Laureate Dr ‘Abd as-Salâm (d. 1996), to establish departments of geology at al-Azhar in Cairo and other centers of Islamic higher learning, whose graduates could discover and exploit the mineral wealth of their own country.[15] The Ottoman Turks had shown similar lack of interest in establishing departments of modern natural sciences in their universities and centers of advanced

[15] Cf. Zaydî (1990).

studies, and only wanted experts and technicians from friendly European countries to upgrade their weaponry during the period of Sultan Selim I 'Yawûz' (reigned 1512–1520).

The Scene in Late Mughal India

The case of late Mughal India was no different. We do not find an organized and consistent effort to establish and upgrade studies of rational sciences in Mughal India. As has been suggested earlier, this was partly due to unconcern and lack of initiative on the part of the rulers as the patrons of higher learning. But to insist on this would be a generalization and a sweeping statement. The situation in the subcontinent appears to be different from the European 'experiments,' as in the patrimonial Mughal state everything emanated from the rulers and their personal predilections. This was perhaps not the case in the European context, where an emancipating and enlightened nobility and the newly emerging mercantile class (particularly the shipping industry) played a more active role in promoting fine arts and technologies. Akbar's courtiers included men of such eminence as Abû l-Fadl '‘Allâmî' (killed 1602) and his brother Faydî (d. 1595), and Shâh Fath Allâh Shîrâzî (d. 1589) in the later period of his life. This tradition continued during the reigns of Jahângîr, Shâh Jahân (reigned 1627–1658) and Awrangzeb. But the point being insisted upon here is that there were only sporadic efforts at establishing institutions of learning by the rulers; perhaps this was not the priority of the nobility unlike their counterparts in Europe. The colleges and universities in most European cities owe their existence to private efforts and support from the feudal class, a phenomenon not very much noticed in Ottoman Turkey, Safawid Iran and Mughal India.

A positive example in this regard, however, is the Madrasat Ghâzî ad-Dîn in Delhi, established in 1692 under the patronage of Ghâzî ad-Dîn Khân (d. 1751), one of the nobles at the court of Awrangzeb. This institution, which later became the well-known Anglo-Arabic College or Delhi College under its principal Alois Sprenger (d. 1893), served as a prime center of learning in pre-1857 Delhi. Apart from this example, there were numerous *madâris* attached to the Sufi hospices [*khânaqâh*s], but they offered instruction predominantly in the so-called 'transmitted religious sciences' [*manqûlât*] that deal with revealed knowledge, i.e. Qur'ânic exegesis [*tafsîr*], *‘ulûm al-hadîth*, literature [*sîra*/*adab*], and jurisprudence [*fiqh*]. This was seen as an

essential requirement for the reinforcement of the tenets of Islamic faith. During Awrangzeb's reign and even beyond, the collation and compilation of Islamic legal documents was carried out on quite a large scale at Awrangabad in the Dekkan (where the emperor had shifted his court), which ultimately resulted in the publication of the *Fatâwâ-yi ‘Alamgîrî*.

The Farangî Mahall in Lucknow, the *madrasa* at Khayrabad, and finally the Madrasa ‘âliyya at Rampur seem to be exceptions to the general rule, as they provided instruction in the rational religious sciences at advanced level but naturally within the confines of knowledge available in Arabic and Persian. As these two classical Oriental languages remained untouched by the advancement of knowledge available in the European vernaculars, the institutions depending upon the resources of Arabic and Persian also remained untouched by post-Renaissance European thought. Besides, we must be aware that the mentioned *madâris* blossomed only after the heydays of the Mughal empire passed, and principalities such as Awadh, where all these *madâris* were situated, managed to acquire *de facto* autonomy from the court at Delhi.

Prince Dârâ Shikûh (executed 1659) who stands as a beacon of light in Mughal history for introducing and incorporating the wisdom of the Upanishads in Persian does not appear to have been inspired by the examples of Taxila and Nalanda, the centers of rational sciences in ancient India. However, he must be credited for his contribution in fostering an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for other religions.

Another question that continues to baffle us is the absence of interest towards Europe and its centers of civilization and learning in the East. While European travellers have had a passion to see the East, particularly India, from at least the 13th century AD onwards,[16] no such sentiment was ever exhibited among the people of the East to see Europe. There are no records of any distinguished Muslim visiting Rome and pre-1453 Byzantium, let alone Leiden, Bologna, Paris, Genoa,

[16] Cf. Rubiés (2000). Here a number of reasons for the interest in travel to the East are named, which are mainly linked to different types of travellers. Thus, the early travelling to the East by lay travellers, such as the famous Marco Polo (d. 1324) of Venice, was based on the intellectual movement of the so-called 'Florentine humanism,' whereas the interest of Christian missionaries was, of course, of another kind. In the 16th century, finally, independent travellers became more and more sceptical of the East and, therefore, provided a fertile ground for the approaching 'Orientalism' of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Venice or London. Rather significantly, the great Arab traveller Ibn Battûta (d. 1369 AD) did not have any European cities on his itinerary.

While the Orientalists of the 18th and 19th centuries freely wrote and commented upon Eastern civilization, art and culture, there is little reciprocity from the East, particularly India. The Orientalists created, distorted and fabricated the East and its myths, and by the middle of the 19th century went to the extent of appropriating the right to speak for the East, as demonstrated by Edward Said in his *Orientalism* (1978). But the Muslims remained indifferent to anything that Europe offered in terms of ideas and institutions.[17] The first outpourings of European thought in Arabic, Persian and Urdu were not seen before the middle of the 19th century, and a fuller realization of their power and scope was felt only after Europe had politically conquered almost the whole of Asia and Africa.

The above scenario has only been given as a backdrop to the predilections of the managers and the academic leaders of the *madâris* in Mughal India. That they lagged behind in the advancement of ideas and thought systems was a fallout of the stagnation of the educational system after the fall of Baghdad in 1258 AD and a consequence of the political domination of Europe, particularly after the defeat and dismemberment of Ottoman Empire in 1918.

However, it must be said to the credit of the *madâris* and the *madrasa* graduates in Mughal India that in the disciplines of revealed knowledge and so-called 'transmitted religious sciences,' their contribution is indeed significant in the Islamic world as a whole. The commentaries on the Qur'ân, the promotion of *hadîth* literature, critical treatises on the tenets of Islam, the compilation and systematization of *fiqh* in the form of *fatâwâ*-collections, the writings of authentic and well-researched biographies of the Prophet Muhammad in Persian, and historiography as a discipline were developed in keeping with the most rigorous standards of scholarship. In this regard the contributions of ‘Abd al-Haqq 'Muhaddith' Dihlawî (d. 1642); Shâh Walî Allâh Dihalwî (d. 1762) and his illustrious sons, Shâh Râfi‘ ad-Dîn (d. 1817), Shâh ‘Abd al-‘Azîz (d. 1824), and Shâh ‘Abd al-Qâdir (d. 1827); his not less renowned grandson Shâh Ismâ‘îl Dihlawî (killed 1831); and also Mawlawî Mamluk ‘Alî (d. 1851), Shâh Muhammad Panâh ‘Atâ’ Salonî (d. 1860), the famous *‘ulamâ’* of the Farangî Mahall in Lucknow, and finally

[17] Cf. Said (1995: 92–10). For the Indian case, cf. Inden (1990).

Mawlawî Fadl-i Haqq Khayrâbâdî (d. 1861) are worth mention in this regard.

Francis Robinson has given tables of curricula in Ottoman Turkey, Safawid Iran and the *dars-i nizâmî* in Mughal India at the close of the 17th century.[18] While in the Ottoman curriculum there are no headings for mathematics and medicine in the rational religious sciences [*ma'qûlât*], there is greater focus on the transmitted religious sciences [*manqûlât*], in particular on the principles of jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*] and *fiqh* itself, besides the study of *hadîth* literature and *tafsîr al-qur'ân*. The Safawid curriculum, on the contrary, includes, besides the traditional sciences, mathematics, logic [*mantiq*] and philosophy [*hikma*] in good measure. The *dars-i nizâmî* includes, in addition to morphology [*sarf*] and syntax [*nahw*], rhetoric [*'ilm al-balâgha*], principles of jurisprudence and *fiqh*, *'ulûm al-hadîth* and *tafsîr*, and a number of topics and books in mathematics, logic, philosophy and theology on par with the Safawid curriculum. In the Ottoman curriculum works of medicine [*tibb*] are not recorded at this stage, though they were to be included later.[19]

A cursory glance at the curricula of the three great empires indicates a general tendency towards the marginalization of the applied rational sciences, particularly of the disciplines of physics [*'ilm at-tabî'a*], astronomy [*hay'a*], alchemy (as the predecessor of modern chemistry) and medicine, wherein Muslims had made significant contributions in these fields from the 8th to the 13th centuries AD. Even the emphasis on *ma'qûlât* in the original *dars-i nizâmî* of the late 17th century became increasingly obscured in later modifications of the syllabus, aiming no longer at practical purposes but becoming more and more of an intellectual exercise with only little relevance for society. Much could be said to explain the absence of the will to engage with the latest developments in the world of ideas and developing systems of knowledge in *madrasa* education. But the fact remains that this gap resulted in the overall decline in the standards and scope of education which left its graduates competent mainly in the transmitted religious sciences, over and above the principles of jurisprudence and *fiqh*, historiography [*târîkh*] and rhetorics, besides the mastery of the classical

[18] Cf. Robinson (2001: 240–251). Here, it needs to be emphasized that the *dars-i nizâmî* owed its origin to the demands of the *nawwâb*s of Awadh during the process of their political emancipation from the Mughal court in Delhi.
[19] Cf. ibid.

languages, Arabic and Persian. From the perspective of today's secular polity and its requirements concerning the intellectual elites, this can hardly be considered a mean achievement in itself. If a system of secular education were also to have existed side by side, the two would have complemented each other. Why this did not happen remains an enigma that deserves to be addressed.

Conclusion

Contrary to the modern perception regarding the *madrasa* and the *madrasa*-educated graduates, this Islamic institution has a glorious history. For a long time the graduates of the *madâris* were the torch-bearers of knowledge, revealed and secular, who transformed our worldview and society in a significant manner. There was never any gap or dichotomy in the realms of the divine and the secular.

It will perhaps not be an exaggeration to say that after Latin, Arabic became the *lingua franca*, with all knowledge available in it. The fall of Baghdad and the gradual marginalization of philosophy as an academic discipline also resulted in the change of emphasis in curricula design. The Renaissance and, inseparably related to it, the advancement of knowledge in Europe remained unnoticed for a long time in the Orient, till the European military might and expansion knocked at their doors. The late realization that the Orient, though militarily and politically still formidable, lagged far behind in intellectual pursuits did not bring about any qualitative shift in their emphasis. A parallel and powerful move to shun intellectual pursuits and revert to traditional sciences brought further deterioration. It is nothing but a siege mentality inwardly and the spectre of being hunted and haunted outwardly that further narrowed down the options of *madrasa* managers and its graduates. It is only with a radically positive and healthy approach that things can be bettered. This is difficult though not impossible.

Postscript

All surmises are subject to correction and refutation. What struck me as complex and inexplicable was my reading of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khân's tract supporting the geocentric theory of Ptolemy as against the then current views in 1853 and also the fact that Sayyid Ahmad Khân corrected his position the very next year when he came to know of Copernicus and his arguments against the geocentric theory. It led me to my surmise that Sir Sayyid was at least in this regard three

centuries behind the European systems of knowledge. However, the availability of Tafaddul Husayn's translation of Newton's *Principia* into Arabic done in the late 18th century and other relevant literature point in a different direction. Moreover, some recent publications lead us to far different conclusions. It appears that the hypothesis that Muslim interest in the Christian West began in the early 19th century (to which Bernard Lewis also subscribes)[20] is not very tenable. As new researches show, people from the Muslim and Christian worlds already mixed and intermingled during the 16th and 17th centuries. In this connection reference may be made to the works of George Makdisi and, even more important, those of Nabil Matar.[21] The information and argument of researches about the *bilâd an-nasârâ* [land of the Christians] cited earlier makes it much more puzzling why the Islamic East remained unaware of and indifferent to the corpus of new ideas regarding science, literature, politics and arts that came in the wake of the rise of humanism and the Renaissance in Europe. A comparative study of the syllabi in the institutions of the Safawid, Ottoman and Mughal empires does not seem to have taken cognizance of what was being read and taught in secular realms in the institutions of European empires.

This postscript is being added by way of an apology, lest a reader of my chapter is misled to accept the generalizations regarding the Islamic East's contact with the West dating back to the early 19th century in which I also at times indulged. I end my note with the following lines from T.S. Eliot's *East Coker*:

The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,
For the pattern is new in every moment
And every moment is a new and shocking
Valuation of all we have been.[22]

[20] Cf. Lewis (2002).
[21] Cf. Makdisi (1981: 224–291; 1990: 294–347); Matar (1998, 1999, 2003).
[22] Eliot (1996: 16).

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2

Madāris and the Challenges of Modernity in Colonial India

FARHAT HASAN

The post-9/11 developments have been marked by a renewed interest in the *madâris*. While the interest is welcome, its motives are pernicious. Much of the concern for the *madâris* these days is motivated by the assumption that they are hotbeds of terrorism, training young Muslims for a life of *jihâd* against the progressive forces of the modern world. The intellectual justification for such an assumption comes, among other sources, from Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' thesis, in which 'Islam' and 'the West' are projected as the antithesis of each other, engaged in a perpetual and typically irreconcilable conflict that should in the end lead to the global triumph of modern Western civilization.[1] The *madâris*, as repositories of Islamic knowledge, are portrayed as the nucleus of Islam's resistance, providing the necessary training and the cultural resources to Muslims for *jihâd* against the Western world. Of course, those who reject the West also jettison progress and rationality, and so in the dominant discourses *madâris* are represented as institutions that defend tradition (as against modernity), obscurantism (as against progress) and faith (as against scientific rationalism). While several scholars have questioned the alleged links between the *madâris* and terrorism, they are still commonly perceived as relics of a bygone era that have, for several centuries now, suffered from the malaise of inertia and obscurantism.[2]

[1] Cf. Huntington (1993, 1996). Huntington's thesis has been challenged by a large number of concerned scholars from a variety of perspectives. There is no point in mentioning them all here, but for some persuasive arguments against his theory, cf. Esposito (1992); Salamé (1993); Haliday (1993, 1994); Robinson (2000: 28–43).

[2] For example, cf. Mujeeb (1967); Geertz (1965); Eickelman (1978: 485–516);

Perceptions of *Madāris* in the Colonial Period

This often-held—if still facile—perception has had a long life. Already in the colonial period, British officials and modern Muslim reformers saw the *madâris* as obstacles to the progress of Muslim community.[3] The third Âghâ Khân, Sultân Muhammad Shâh (d. 1957), while speaking to the delegates of the 'Muhammedan Educational Conference at Delhi' in 1911, bemoaned the continued existence of the *madâris*, and described them as 'old-fashioned' and dated institutions, even in matters religious/spiritual. I will illustrate this by quoting from his Presidential Address, for he represents the standpoint of modern educated Muslims:

> And now, Gentlemen, let us direct our attention to a question with which your conference is intimately concerned, namely, how have the Indian Muslims taken advantage of the chances which Providence has placed in their way? We must all acknowledge with shame and regret that so far we have failed. Throughout the whole length and breadth of India how many national schools are there in existence which educate Muslim boys and girls in their faith and at the same time in modern secular state? Is there even one to every hundred that our nation needs and which we should have established had we been any other healthy people? *There are, indeed, a certain number of old-fashioned Maktabs and Madrassahs* [sic] *which continue to give a parrot-like teaching of the Koran, but even in these places no attempt is made either to improve the morals of the boys or to bring before them the eternal truths of the faith. As a rule, prayers are but rarely repeated, and when said, not one per cent of the boys understand what they say or why*.[4]

Accusations against these *madâris* that they were preaching armed *jihâd* and indulging in religious warfare are not recent; their origins also go back to the colonial period.[5] It is indeed quite revealing that

Saiyed and Talib (1985: 191–209); Alam (2003: 2123–2126); Ara (2004: 34–38).

[3] Cf., for example, Hâlî (1957: 427); *Report of the Education Commission of 1882 on Muslim Education*, cited in Mahmood (1981: 169f.).

[4] Nathan (1904: 113) [emphasis added].

[5] Cf. Metcalf (1978: 11–34].

even as the *madâris*, just like most other institutions of the pre-colonial period, have undergone considerable changes, popular perceptions have even today remained very similar to the ones commonly held in the times of British rule. It is, therefore, not the *madâris* that have refused change, but our understanding of them! With uncharacteristic obstinacy, we continue to see them as representing forces that have always resisted change and modernity. Insulated from the wider society, these redundant institutions, we like to believe, exist on the margins of civil societies, providing emotional sustenance and organizational support to discontented individuals and social groups.

This picture of the *madâris* is largely drawn by suppression of the evidence of immense diversity. In colonial India, *madâris* differed from one another in terms of size, social milieu, syllabus content, method of instruction, relations with the state, attitude toward modern education, etc. It is, therefore, hazardous to color them all with the same broad brush. The picture is complex, and before we offer any generalization, we should bear that in mind.

Indeed, the primary objective of *madâris* in colonial India was to provide knowledge of 'Islam.' This is, however, a frivolous generalization, for while all *madâris* agreed in upholding the religion of Islam as the source of 'true' and 'authentic' knowledge, they considerably differed from one another in their understanding of what they considered to be 'true' or 'authentic' Islam. The Deoband School and the Ahl-i hadîth, for example, believed in scripturalist Islam and eschewed customary practices.[6] In contrast, the scholars of the Barelwî school of thought (or, as they call themselves, the Ahl-i sunnat wa jamâ‘at) believed in a mediational, custom-laden religious practice, and saw local customs and rituals as essential components of a 'true' Islam.[7] In the eyes of its founder Ahmad Ridâ Khân Barelwî (d. 1921), the Deobandîs and the Ahl-i hadîth were so far removed from 'true' Islam that they could justifiably be called *kâfirûn*, or infidels.[8] And, the beliefs and rituals of well-known Deobandîs, such as Rashîd Ahmad Gangohî (d. 1905) and Ashraf ‘Alî Thânawî (d. 1943) were, according to

[6] On the Deoband school, Barbara D. Metcalf's work, even more than two decades after publication, remains a classic (cf. Metcalf 2002). Also useful are: Faruqi (1963); and the following works in Urdu: Ridwî (1972); Qâsimî (1968). On the Ahl-i hadîth, cf. Nawshahirawî (1937); Amritsârî (1970).
[7] For details on the Barelwîs, cf. Sanyal (1996).
[8] Cf. Khân (1975: 15).

him, nothing less than 'satanism' [*shaytâniyya*].[9] The Deobandîs and the Ahl-i hadîth, again, differed on the sources of correct religious practice. The former based themselves on the texts of the Hanafî school of law for guidance in correct 'belief and ritual' [*'aqâ'id wa 'ibâdat*], whereas the latter, being *ghayr-muqallidûn*, or non-followers of one of the canonical schools of Islamic law, rejected all classical legal compendia in favor of direct reliance on the Qur'ân and the *ahâdîth* [i.e. free *ijtihâd*]. The disagreements between them over questions of authentic religious practice led to a sort of a 'pamphlet warfare,' with the scholars of each school writing pamphlets in refutation of the other.[10] It was, for example, in response to the attack on the Deoband school by the Ahl-i hadîth scholar Muhammad Husayn Batâlawî (d. 1920) that Mahmûd al-Hasan Deobandî (d. 1921) wrote his first major work, *Adillat-i kâmila* [*The Best Argument*].[11] Furthermore, while all these seminaries of high Islamic learning relied on the *dars-i nizâmî* (i.e. the curriculum evolved at the Farangî Mahall in Lucknow in the 18th century) for teaching and instruction, there were differences in the degree of emphasis.[12] While at Farangî Mahall the stress was on *ma'qûlât* or rational sciences (such as logic, philosophy and the principles of jurisprudence), at Deoband it was on *manqûlât* or revealed sciences.[13]

Disjunction of Religious from Temporal Learning

Madâris also differed over the extent of acceptance of Western education and English as language of instruction, with some shunning them, others tolerating them with restraints, and yet several others finding them indispensable. Contrary to popular beliefs, there is no evidence to suggest that these *madâris* were hostile to modern, secular education or saw it as a threat to their religious practice, and, therefore, as un-Islamic. The most that can be said is that some of these

[9] Cf. ibid.: 22.
[10] Cf. Metcalf (2002: 212f).
[11] Cf. al-Hasan (n.d.).
[12] It needs, however, to be clearly pointed out that the *dars-i nizâmî* underwent a lot of modifications since its elaboration by Mullâ Nizâm ad-Dîn Sihâlawî (d. 1748) of the Farangî Mahall. It appears therefore as if the designation '*dars-i nizâmî*' symbolizes only a formalized curriculum that has challenged the so far prevailing practice of individual tuition of the students in the *madrasa*.
[13] For the educational and religious practices at the Farangî Mahall, cf. Robinson (2001).

madâris, particularly the high seminaries (e.g. the Dâr al-'ulûm at Deoband, the Farangî Mahall at Lucknow, and the Mazâhir al-'ulûm at Sahâranpûr) remained largely indifferent, though still in no way hostile, to modern education. Muhammad Qâsim Nanawtawî (d. 1877), one of the founding members of the Deoband school, for example, was favorably inclined to the suggestion that after completing their studies at Deoband, students should learn the English language and Western subjects.[14] The *'ulamâ'* did realize that without modern education employment opportunities for Muslims were scarce, but the orthodox among them saw learning for jobs as ignoble and immoral. To the suggestion that Muslims should take modern education for the sake of employment, earlier mentioned Rashîd Ahmad Gangohî, another influential member of the *madrasa* at Deoband, indignantly responded, 'Would you clean latrines to secure a job?'[15]

The rationale behind this general indifference came from the *dîn-dunyâ* dichotomy, a rigid separation of the affairs of religion from matters concerning worldly existence. In this regard, Mawlânâ Manâzir Ahsan Gîlânî (d. 1956), a scholar of the Deoband school, complained in 1944 of the rigid separation and lack of contacts between religious [*dînî*] and temporal [*dunyâwî*] learning, one producing the religious scholars [*'ulamâ'*] and the other the modern educated ones [*ta'lîm yâfta*].[16] The separation of religious from temporal knowledge can be perceived as an offshoot of the dichotomy between matter and spirit in the dominant theories of epistemology in that period. It is, however, important to realize that this bifurcation in knowledge is not found in traditional Islamic thought, and found its way into the *madâris* from European post-enlightenment rational thought.[17] This was the point that was emphasized by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall (d. 1936) as early as 1927 in an article entitled 'Muslim Education,' published in the renowned Hyderabad-based journal *Islamic Culture*. Pickthall pointed out that Muslims opposing Western education were doing so to defend tradition, but their rejection of that education, based on the separation of the sacred from the profane and of the sacred from secular education, itself went against the Islamic tradition and was borrowed from modern Western thought.[18] Even so, this was not an

[14] Cf. Anonymous (1873/1874: 16).
[15] Cited in Metcalf (2002: 101).
[16] Cf. Gîlânî (1944). For details on the work and its author, cf. Ahmad (1985).
[17] For details, cf. Harrison (1990).
[18] Cf. Pickthall (1927: 100–108).

instance of 'colonial mimicry,'[19] because in the process of the appropriation of the 'sacred'–'secular' divide, these *madâris* and their *'ulamâ'* reversed the hierarchies; they privileged the sacred over the secular, unlike the modern West where it was the converse that held true. In the West, Enlightenment rationalism had, in the words of Talal Asad, led to 'the construction of religion as a new historical object: anchored in personal experience, expressible as belief-statements, dependent on private institutions, and practiced in one's spare time. This construction of religion ensures that it is part of what is *inessential* to our common politics, economy, science and morality.'[20]

In appropriating the 'sacred'–'temporal' dichotomy from post-Enlightenment thought and then reclaiming it as their own, the *madâris* were redefining their religion, and more generally their culture, as an autonomous and sovereign space, insulated from imperialist political and cultural domination. To that extent, the *dîn-dunyâ* separation should be construed as a form of cultural resistance, an effort to protect the 'inner world' from Western intrusion. In a perceptive essay, Partha Chatterjee has argued that in British India the colonized subjects dichotomized their social experiences into an 'outer world' and an 'inner world.' The 'outer world' was political and materialist, and in this world they conceded their inferior and subject status. The 'inner world,' on the other hand, was spiritual and domestic, where they still claimed their innate superiority and sovereign status.[21] In eschewing modern learning, these *madâris* were in a way asserting their superiority in the spiritual domain, but in the process of doing so almost rendered their spiritual heritage both impregnable and incommensurable to the modern West.

Local *Madāris* and the Colonial State

To this picture of general indifference to modern education found in the 'high' seminaries, the regional and local *madâris* reveal interesting variations at several places in South Asia. The usual perceptions we

[19] 'Colonial Mimicry' refers to a form of discourse in which the colonized subjects 'mimic' the colonizers, by adopting the colonizers' cultural habits, institutions, knowledge, beliefs and values. Homi K. Bhabha describes it as a process by which the colonized subject is reproduced as 'almost the same, but not quite' (1994: 86).
[20] Asad (1993: 207) [emphasis in the original].
[21] Cf. Chatterjee (1997, 2001).

have about the *madâris* are, unfortunately, all derived from studies of the national seminaries, and the suppression of regional and local differences. The *Official Report of the Education Commission of 1882* mentions *madâris* in Hugli, Dacca, Rajshahi, and Chittagong, where English was offered as an optional subject and there were separate masters for teaching English. In 1871, according to one official estimate, out of the 1,089 students studying in six such *madâris* in Bengal, 322 were learning English.[22]

It also appears that the local *madâris* were more inclusive than the 'high' seminaries. In the influential *madâris*, such as the *Dâr al-'ulûm* at Deoband, the later Farangî Mahall and the Nadwat al-'ulamâ' in Lucknow, social and cultural interactions among the various religious communities were discouraged, and educational reforms were undertaken within an exclusive community framework. In several of these *madâris*, as we saw, the emphasis on 'true' and 'authentic' Islam was merely a strategy that aimed to reduce the communally shared spaces in socio-cultural life. In contrast, much of the appeal of the local *madâris* rested on their ability to operate within these very shared spaces, by appealing to the custom-based, folk version of Islam.[23] It is owing to their inclusive, incorporative character that they even admitted Hindus in their institutions. Bhâgat Phûl Singh (d. 1942), for example, was a Jat peasant, who established a school for the education of peasants in southeast Punjab, known as 'Gurukul Bhenswâl.' His early education occurred in a local *madrasa*, and according to his daughter's testimony, up to the eighth form.[24] Unfortunately, these local *madâris* still await a proper study, but it is still important to bear in mind that at least some of them were markedly different from the 'high' seminaries in terms of their educational system and religious beliefs and rituals.[25]

It is equally important to realize that, given the abysmal failure of the state in primary education, *madâris* were the only avenues of access to basic education for the socially and economically depressed

[22] Cf. *Report of the Education Committee of 1882 on Muslim Education* (pp. 494–496, cited in Mahmood [1981: 160]).
[23] For the role of local *madâris* in spreading literacy among the economically weaker social groups, cf. Khân (1988).
[24] Cf. Datta (1998: 35, 2001: 27).
[25] However, the contribution of Arshad Alam, and the joint chapter of Patricia and Roger Jeffery and Craig Jeffrey in the present volume point towards the direction in which such future research might be conducted.

people in most small towns [*qasabât/*sg.: *qasaba*] and villages of India. Technically called *makâtib* [sg.: *maktab*], these so-called traditional sources of learning provided almost free education to the children of those families who could not afford to bear the expenses of modern schools. The strength of their infrastructural network can be gauged from the fact that the state looked at them with considerable concern and made continuous efforts to control them, often under the guise of modernization. In the wake of the revolt of 1857, the first Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab issued an order removing all schools (i.e. *madâris*) from 'the precincts of mosques and other buildings of a religious character.'[26] He also issued directions for 'disuse of all books of a religious character in the schools.'[27] In the late 19th century, an effort was made to bring all *makâtib* or *madâris* providing primary education under the control of government colleges and centers of higher learning.[28] When that failed—with a view to what was officially described as an attempt to see that these *madâris*/*makâtib* were 'gradually molded into true primary schools'—the British state in Bengal rendered them eligible for government aid, provided they introduced secular subjects in their curriculum. The change in official policy is explained in the *Report of the Education Commission of 1882*:

> Accepting the indigenous schools of the country in the form in which, under the special conditions of locality, they were most popular, the Bengal system endeavoured by the promise of Government support to introduce into the traditional course of study certain subjects of instruction which should bring the school so aided into some relation, more or less close, with the general system of education in the Province. The object being to encourage natural and spontaneous movement, it followed that *if in any locality the existing system had a religious basis, the religious character of the school should be no bar to its receiving aid, provided that it introduced a certain amount of secular instruction into the course. Many hundreds of maktabs* [sic] *have in this way been admitted into the primary system of Bengal.*[29]

[26] Cited in Zaman (2002: 63).
[27] Ibid.
[28] Cf. the *Report of the Education Committee of 1882 on Muslim Education,* 494–96 (cited in Mahmood 1981: 160).
[29] Ibid.: 160 [emphasis added].

It is clearly mistaken to assume that *madâris* were out-dated institutions in colonial India, existing on the fringes of society. Compared to the modern institutions of learning,[30] British officials repeatedly lamented that the *madrasa* system of education was better integrated, and enjoyed a much bigger constituency.[31] Even those Muslims who preferred modern, secular education for their children would not infrequently send them first to *madâris* to ensure that they had a good grounding in their religion, before they took up modern education. The Education Commission of 1882 makes this observation in the following words:

> But apart from the social and historical conditions of the Muhammadan Community in India, there are causes of a strictly educational character which heavily weight in the race of life. *The teaching of the mosque must precede the lessons of the school.* The one object of a young Hindu is to obtain an education which will fit him for an official or a professional career. *But before the young Muhammadan is allowed to turn his thoughts to secular instruction, he must commonly pass some years in going through a course of sacred language.* The Muhammadan boy, therefore, enters school later than the Hindu.[32]

For the British, not unreasonably, the enduring influence of *madâris* over Muslim community and the failure of modern schools and colleges to undermine it were matters of quite a concern. No state could let such a significant resource of social capital in civil society slip out of its control, and it is this that provides the context to the repeated efforts on its part to control them.

[30] In 1875, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khân established the Anglo-Muhammadan Oriental College at ‘Alîgarh to provide modern education to Muslims in India. Supported by the British government, it was converted into a University in 1911. The early history of the ‘Alîgarh school is authoritatively covered in Lelyveld (1978). For the role of ‘Alîgarh in national politics, cf. Hasan (1998). In 1920, the Nationalist Muslims established the Jâmi‘a milliyya islâmiyya in Delhi with the objective of providing modern education, along nationalist, secular lines. For the history of the Jâmi‘a, cf. Tonki (1983); Madhûlî (1965); Talib (1998).

[31] Cf. the *Report of the Education Committee of 1882 on Muslim Education*, 494–96 (cited in Mahmood 1981: 147–151).

[32] Ibid.: 169 [emphases added].

As we know, with the acceptance of Thomas B. Macaulay's (d. 1859) famous *Minute on Education* by the Governor-General Lord William Bentinck (d. 1839) in 1835, the British government withdrew its support from *madâris* and other institutions of traditional learning. The limited funds that were earmarked for educational development were now made available only to schools and colleges providing Western education:

> His Lordship in Council is of opinion that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education should be best employed on English education alone.[33]

Links of *Madāris* with Civil Society

It is a reflection of the strength of *madâris* and their organic links in society that they were thriving in the colonial period despite the lack of state patronage. In fact, most *madâris* were able to procure enough funds from the public, and some even considered government aid polluting and immoral. The above-mentioned Muhammad Qâsim Nanawtawî, while formulating rules for the maintenance of the *Dâr al-'ulûm* at Deoband, is reported to have said: 'The participation of the government and the wealthy is harmful.'[34]

Clearly then, *madâris* were not fringe institutions, but existed in colonial India as constituent elements of something like a 'civil society.'[35] Their chief objective was, of course, religious renewal and moral purification, but in fulfilling this they had to assume a large number of other functions as well. The *'ulamâ'* in the *madâris* offered expert legal opinions on matters that refer to the *sharî'a.* They solemnized marriages, and negotiated with families in cases of marital discord. Some of them had clinics where they provided *yûnânî* treatment [i.e. medical treatment according to the classical school of medicine, based on a reception of Galen] for those who were unwell. They also, as we saw, provided primary education to those who were too poor to afford government and private-owned secular schools. Their multifarious

33 Sharp (1965: 150).
34 Qâsimî (1968: 17) [translation mine].
35 On the complex term 'civil society,' cf. Keane (1988: 14).

activities enabled them to be better integrated in local societies and to successfully withstand both the indifference of the government and the blunt attacks of the modern educated Muslim reformers.

Western Education as an Issue in 'High' Seminaries

Indeed, by virtue of the influence they carried in society, they were crucial in the shaping of Muslim attitudes toward the forces of modernity. As mentioned earlier, *madâris* differed considerably in their level of acceptance of Western education, and there were many *madâris* where English was offered as an optional subject. It is important to emphasize that even in institutions that eschewed modern learning this was never a settled issue. There were incessant pressures, even occasional conflicts, from staff members and students for modification in the method and content of instruction. For example, contrary to the views of many others in the Farangî Mahall, Mawlânâ ‘Abd al-Bârî (d. 1926) could see no contradiction between the pursuit of religious and modern scientific knowledge:

> It is wrong to assume that the study of modern philosophy promotes atheism. It is bad society that does this. Most of those with atheistic leanings are quite ignorant of ancient or modern philosophy or metaphysics. It has now been definitely proved that the idea that study of the material sciences and metaphysics promotes atheism is ill founded and quite wrong.[36]

Mawlânâ Manâzir Ahsan Gîlânî of the Deoband School, whom we have mentioned earlier, vigorously argued in favor of the fusion of religious [*dînî*] and temporal [*dunyâwî*] learning, and devised a reformed course to accomplish that for Deoband.[37] On the contrary, Muhammad Zakariyyâ Kândhalawî (d. 1982), another leading scholar of this tradition, refers in his *Âp betî* [*Autobiography*] to a student strike that took place only a little more than a decade after India's independence, in which the striking students accused his *madrasa* staff of nepotism and financial irregularities; the real reason, according to Zakariyyâ, was that they wanted 'fancier diplomas, a different kind of light in the courtyard, better food, courses in literature so that they

[36] Cited in Robinson (2001: 163).
[37] Cf. Gîlânî (1944).

could sprinkle their discourses with fancy allusions, a "degree" so that they could get employment.'[38] Apart from his opinion on the matter, it does seem from Zakariyyâ's observation that there was a real pressure on these *madâris* to open up to modern education, and introduce job-oriented courses. It would, therefore, clearly be wrong to see them as unalterable institutions, functioning without any tension, conflict, or change. There were many kinds of *madâris*, and within any *madrasa*, many voices, and, therefore, possibilities of conflict and change.

Often, when we attack the *madâris* for ignoring modern education, we overlook the fact that their prime objective was to provide religious education and lessons in moral purification. Confronted with the marginalization of their cultural resources and intellectual heritage by European science and rationality, many *madâris* saw themselves as leading movements of religious revitalization [*ihyâ'*] and renewal [*tajdîd*]. While the local *madâris* may have retained their connections with the customary practices, the 'high' seminaries discarded them and presented Islam within an orthoprax great tradition. There were considerable differences among these *madâris* in their vision of 'authentic Islam' [*aslî islâm*], but, interestingly, they were all in agreement on the plausibility of the pre-existence of a 'true' or 'authentic' Islam waiting to be rescued from some pristine past, imbued with an invariant essence and existing outside history. In the dissemination of their version of real Islam they made use of modern forms of organization and technological developments. As has been convincingly demonstrated by Barbara Metcalf, institutions such as Deoband were based on 'the British bureaucratic style of educational institutions instead of the informal familial pattern of schools then prevalent in India.'[39] Their emergence, in fact, suggests, 'an incipient trend toward a formal bureaucratization of the *'ulamâ'* and their institutions.'[40]

Use of Printing Press in Religious Instruction

In order to disseminate their version of real Islam, the *madâris* were also vigorously participating in what can, for lack of a better term, be called the 'sacred public sphere'; this was a space of inter-subjective communication that was restricted to the Muslim community. This

[38] Cited in Metcalf (2004: 78).
[39] Metcalf (1978: 30). For more on that matter, cf. Metcalf (2002: 92–100).
[40] Metcalf (1978: 29).

space, however, cannot be equated with the Habermasian 'public sphere'[41]—though it may have co-existed with it in a distinct capacity —for it was not accessible to the non-Muslims. Nor can it be called a 'private sphere,' for it transcended ties of household and kin, and had the entire Indian Muslim community as its constituency. Within this 'sacred public sphere,' the Deobandîs debated with the Ahl-i hadîth over the validity of the medieval law schools and the institutions and practices of the Sufis.[42] Within this space again, the Barelwîs and the Deobandîs debated between themselves the significance of the folk and syncretic elements in Indian Islam.[43]

In the dissemination of instruction in authentic religious practice and beliefs, the *madâris* made abundant use of the modern lithographic printing press. Print rendered the knowledge of Islam readily available and immediately comprehensible. It enabled the *'ulamâ'* to reach a much wider constituency, even as it eroded their monopoly over the production and interpretation of Islamic knowledge. The extent to which the *madâris* made use of the modern printing press can be gauged from the estimate of the government of the North-Western Provinces and Awadh that, in 1877, at least 70 percent of all religious books were written by Muslims.[44] In 1895, Mawlânâ Nadhîr Husayn Dihlawî (d. 1902), a leading scholar of the Ahl-i hadîth school, described the significance of print in the following words: 'Now God has been gracious by providing us with books in abundance. Books which one could not think of acquiring even in dreams are now available for cowries.'[45]

Francis Robinson has presented an interesting study of the impact of print on Islam in India. His work reveals that the migration of word from oral/aural into visual space, as a result of the widespread use of print, led to a reified understanding of Islam, in which Muslims could present and conceptualize their faith as a system. It also encouraged the rise to prominence of an action-oriented understanding of Islam, based on individual commitments and responsibilities. And, as in Europe, print diffusion caused the 'interiorization' of religious experience,

[41] Habermas (1991). For some perceptive discussions on 'public sphere,' cf. Calhoun (1992).
[42] Cf. Khân (1906); Amritsârî (1970); Metcalf (2002: 268–296).
[43] Cf. Metcalf (2002: 296–314); Sanyal (1996).
[44] Cf. Metcalf (2002: 202).
[45] Cited in Lakhnawî (1958: 39) [translation mine].

leading to the recognition of the manifold nature of the human individuals and a this-worldly attitude toward religion.[46]

The seminaries made extensive use of print to propagate their respective visions of 'authentic Islam,' pure and single, unchanged and unchangeable. In this search for the 'real Islam,' one notices an effort to draw a line of closure, but, as we saw earlier, that line was never impermeable, and was breached and ruptured far too often. Similarly, with a stress on exclusionary boundaries, these *madâris* produced a discourse of a unified and homogenous Muslim community [*umma*]. The discourse on *umma* invested the Muslims with a concrete identity that perpetuated itself without internal differentiation. Imbued with an unalterable essence, it has pre-determined and, of course, supra-historical characteristics that can withstand the vagaries of change, the cruel hand of history. While one does notice the influence of 'orientalism' in this type of essentialism, the concept of a uniform and undifferentiated community was invoked to stress the exclusionary closure of Islam in relation to the forces of modern Western thought. The effort was far from successful. The relationship of *madâris* with modern forces was a complicated one, in which contest and accommodation went hand in hand. Modernity exercised a hegemonic pull in the modern period. One could shut it out from one door, but then it would creep back in by the other.

Conclusion

The *madâris* were integral elements of a 'civil society' in colonial India. The anxieties they aroused for the colonial state, as well as the modern educated reformers, clearly reflects the extent of acceptance and support they enjoyed in the wider society. Confronted with the forces of colonial modernity, they developed highly heterogeneous sets of responses over issues of religious reform, inter-community relations and modern education. It would be mistaken to view their responses to modernity in a homogenous and insular frame of reference. If we refuse to see that, it is, presumably, because they remain for us, despite their diversity, our inferior 'other'—the 'other' of the 'enlightened, rational man.'

[46] Cf. Robinson (2000: 66–104).

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3

Madrasa and *Khānaqāh*, or *Madrasa* in *Khānaqāh*? Education and Sufi Establishments in Northern India

Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri

The Context

The *khânaqâh* as an establishment connotes a Sufic hospice where the initiates of *tasawwuf* spend their time with their spiritual master [*pîr*/ *shaykh*] in meditation, education and spiritual training. This was a comprehensive establishment, usually incorporating a mosque and an elementary religious school [*maktab*]; at a later stage it also came to incorporate a *madrasa* for the advanced disciples. Simultaneously, there were arrangements to provide for the wayfarers, and for the poor and the needy as well. The large hospices had sprawling kitchens [*langar-khâna*s] sufficient to handle arrangements for large public meals; in fact, these arrangements came in handy during calamities of nature as well as when a large number of people needed succor. The *shaykh* thus played a multi-faceted role, satisfying the intellectual and spiritual urges of the advanced classes of the disciples on the one hand and providing solace and inspiration to the multitude of the common people on the other. The details of *khânaqâh/jamâ'at-khâna* life during the times of famous Chishtî Sufis—Shaykh Bâbâ Farîd ad-Dîn 'Ganj-i Shakkâr' (d. 1265) at Pakpattan in West Panjab and Shaykh Nizâm ad-Dîn Awliyâ' (d. 1325), popular as *Mahbûb-i ilâhî* [the beloved of God], at Ghiyâthpûr in Delhi—are to be found in the contemporary sources.[1] Both these centers produced not only a chain of

[1] For details, cf. the descriptions of the various meetings [*majâlis*/ sg.: *majlis*] in the *jamâ'at-khâna* of the *shaykh* as given in the *Fawâ'id al-fuwâd* [*The*

spiritual guides but also scholars who made their mark in the world of scholarship. It was the life at the *khânaqâh* under the command of a *shaykh* that contributed immensely to the making of these persons.

The interrelationship between the *madrasa* and *khanaqâh* is to be understood in the larger trajectory of the relationship between *sharî'a* [i.e. the set of legal and ethical norms in Islam] and *ma'ârifa* [i.e. gnosis in Islam]. *Tasawwuf* has been described by Muhammad Habib as 'the post-graduate creed of Islam';[2] hence the *shaykh* in the *khânaqâh* was not only a spiritual guide for the devotees and the disciples but also a teacher of the higher aspects of Islamic sciences to those who had already undergone the regular courses of study before joining his circle. Thus we have, for example, the case of Shaykh Nizâm ad-Dîn Awliyâ', who had completed his education at Badâ'ûn and Delhi and had already attained some status in the world of scholarship. But when he joined the *khânaqâh* of Bâbâ Farîd at Ajodhan, he was asked by his *shaykh* to take lessons from him in Qur'ânic sciences, a higher book of *tasawwuf*, namely *'Awârif al-ma'ârif* [*The Gifts of Knowledge*] of 'Umar as-Suhrawardî (d. 1234), and the *Tamhîd al-muhtadî* [*The Rightly Guided Preparation*] of Abû Shakûr Salamî on the fundamentals of Islamic faith [*usûl ad-dîn*].[3] When Nizâm ad-Dîn Awliyâ' became a *shaykh* himself, the historian Diyâ' ad-Dîn Baranî (d. after 1357), the poet Amîr Hasan Sijzî and the multi-faceted personality of Amîr Khusraw Dihlawî (d. 1325), along with senior scholars of theology and Islamic law like Shaykh Fakhr ad-Dîn Zarrâdî and Kamâl ad-Dîn Zâhid, all gathered around his person, and he acted as the guide and mentor for such a galaxy of scholars. This tradition has continued uninterrupted in the *khânaqâh*s of the subcontinent, and the centrality of the *shaykh* in the life of the inmates as their teacher and spiritual guide has remained unquestioned.

Benefits of the Heart] of Amîr Hasan 'Alâ' Sijzî (d. 1337), a compilation of the *shaykh's* utterances [*malfûzât*] in five volumes with date, month and year specified. Cf. Nizâmî (1990). For an extremely valuable biography of the *shaykh*, cf. Habîb (1970).

[2] Nizami (1974: 277f.).

[3] 'The *Tamhidat* [sic] is a book on religious law (*fiqh)* and deals with the basic problems of faith with such clarity and depth that whosoever mastered it, developed a deep insight into the most delicate problems of Islamic law and *Shari'at*' (Nizami 1991: 41). For the text of the *Khilâfatnâma* [*Letter of Appointment as Spiritual Successor*] granted to Nizâm ad-Dîn Awliyâ' by Bâbâ Farîd, cf. Nizami (1991: 187f.).

The *khânaqâh*, as an institution, has been a center of higher studies in jurisprudence, theology, literature and philosophy well into recent times. One can cite the case of Sayyid ʻAbd ar-Razzâq, the *Qâdirî-shaykh* of Bansa (d. 1724), who was the most influential mentor and spiritual guide of Mullâ Nizâm ad-Dîn of the Farangî Mahall (d. 1748); the latter, in turn, produced a curriculum of theological studies which has come to be known as the *dars-i nizâmî*. Similarly, Shaykh ʻAbd al-Karîm (d. 1647), the renowned *Chishtî-nizâmî* Sufi of Mânikpûr in Awadh, was the teacher of 'scores of the *ʻulamâ'*', including his favorite disciple and successor Pîr Muhammad of Salon (d. 1687). The latter's *khânaqâh* became a nerve center of the *Chishtiyya-nizâmiyya* order in Awadh. Likewise, Imdâdallâh 'Muhâjir' Makkî (d. 1867) of the *Chishtiyya-sâbiriyya* tradition at Thâna Bhawan in Muzaffarnagar district could stimulate numerous scholars even when he was in forced exile in Mecca. His disciples included luminaries such as Mawlânâ Muhammad Qâsim Nanawtawî (d. 1878), who went on to provide educational leadership to the community by founding the scholarly tradition of Deoband. During the 20th century, we have the example of Mawlânâ Ashraf ʻAlî Thânawî (d. 1939), who had Sayyid Sulayman Nadwî (d. 1953), Mawlânâ ʻAbd al-Mâjid Daryâbâdî (d. 1976) and Professor ʻAbd al-Bârî Nadwî (d. 1976) of the Osmania University in Hyderabad among his disciples.[4]

The tradition of the *khânaqâh* as the center of higher studies has thus been a very vigorous one in northern India. However, one needs to contextualize and work out its contours in order to understand the dynamics of the relationship between the *khânaqâh* and the *madrasa*.

Madrasa, derived from the Arabic root *darasa*, refers to a center of learning where knowledge is imparted, irrespective of its nature. The curriculum of the *madâris* included so-called 'rational religious sciences' [*maʻqûlât*], such as medicine [*tibb*] and astronomy [*hay'at*], the so-called 'transmitted religious sciences' [*manqûlât*], as well as natural sciences, literature, and poetry. In India, it has been such a comprehensive and all-embracing system of education that it has over the centuries produced people like Shâh Fathallâh Shîrâzî (d. 1589), Abû l-Fadl ʻAllâmî (d. 1602), Mîrzâ Asadallâh 'Ghâlib' (d. 1869) and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khân (d. 1898). However, it was only the colonial rulers of the East India Company [EIC] and their ideologues who gave a specific religious connotation to this institution.

[4] For the biographical details of some of them, cf. Nadwî (1993, Vol. I: 19–61, 119–133; Vol. II: 130–168).

Initially, they differentiated between the colleges, established either by the EIC or by individual donations but with their support, like the Hindu College that was founded in 1817 in Calcutta and the traditional educational institutions which operate in the country until now. The methods of instruction at these new colleges was akin to taking a survey of existing knowledge; it was compartmentalized into humanities, social sciences, modern mathematics and other experimental sciences. With the full backing of the British government, these institutions became the torchbearers of modern education in India. In this 'vision of education' implemented by the colonial rulers, the *madâris* were to become merely the centers for religious education and Oriental studies. The students of these institutions were in a way, 'denied' the opportunity to study any of the 'modern subjects.' In case they desired to study such 'modern subjects,' they had to enroll at a college; and colleges were perceived by the traditional Muslim elite with suspicion.[5] This suspicion of the modern British educational institutions was not entirely unjustified, although its historical roots are beyond the scope of this chapter. Hence, a line was drawn; and, to become 'modern,' one had to fall in line with the new agenda. This categorization of educational institutions into two diametrically opposed institutions at the very initial stages of colonial penetration in the subcontinent became a vital tool in the hands of the colonialists in their future discourses on Indian education. The Muslim elite reacted to the new situation in an unrealistic manner. As late as in the 20th century we find people like the inimitable satirist Akbar Ilâhâbâdî (d. 1921), who made fun of the 'degree of a B.A.' and criticized those who were protagonists of modern education for the Muslims, including Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khân.

[5] In his 1858 Urdu pamphlet *Asbâb-i baghâwat-i Hind* [*The Causes of the Indian Revolt*], which was soon after translated into English, Sayyid Ahmad Khân is very categorical that one of the major reasons for the Revolt was the apprehension of the interference of the government with the religious customs of the Indians by doing away 'with the study of Arabic and Sanskrit [...] this way the people would be deprived of a knowledge of the principles of their own faith and their attention turned to books containing the principles of Christian creed' (Khan 2000: 16f.). This was sought to be done by opening 'missionary schools (where) principles of Christian faith were taught'; also, 'when the village schools were established, the general belief was that they were instituted solely with the view of teaching the doctrines of Jesus (ibid.: 18f.). This way the overwhelming majority of the Muslim elite looked with great suspicion upon the institutions established by the British in the early 19th century.

The initial Orientalist discourse of the times of Sir William Jones (d. 1794) and other scholars resulted in their placing equal importance on the classical heritage of the subcontinent together with the 'modern' European subjects in the curricula, and led to the establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 and the Calcutta Madrasa in 1826. Initially, these institutions justified their creation by producing annotated translations and edited texts of some classical Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit works. However, the Orientalists soon lost ground to those eager to push the 'modern' European disciplines as the main curriculum of the other colleges and universities fast coming into existence. In this new situation, institutions like the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Calcutta Madrasa gradually lost their relevance and were left burdened with the 'Oriental' tag.

Thus, we witness a process whereby *madâris* were reduced from institutions of higher learning to places where just the rudiments of Islamic theology were to be taught. This process began with the coming of British colonialism, and the course it followed appears very instructive.

During the course of the 1857 revolt, the entire class of the holders of *ma'âfî*-land [i.e. revenue-free land grants] had participated in a very large number in the actual fight as well in issuing the various proclamations; hence, they became suspect in the eyes of the British. The British adopted a number of measures which curtailed their position in society. Now they were no better than poor cousins of the landed elite, which was supporting the policy of the British Raj in order to safeguard their own interests as against the aspirations of the nationalist leaders. Most of the Muslim *ta'alluqadâr*s [landlords] of the United Provinces became supporters of the Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan. All these factors led the Indian National Congress [INC] to adopt a resolution in 1946 to abolish 'all the intermediaries' between the cultivators and the state.[6] The Zamindari Abolition and Land Reform Act was ultimately passed in 1952, which deprived the *ma'âfî* holders and the Sufi institutions from the only source of sustenance they had; thus, just survival became a hard struggle, leave alone the maintenance of these institutions.

It is pertinent to mention here the creation of the 'Sunni Central Waqf Board of U.P.' way back in 1936 and the role it has performed

[6] Cf. Jafri (2004: 80–93).

thereafter. The institution was supposedly set up as the custodian of all the then existing *waqf* properties [i.e. religious endowments; pl.: *awqâf*] of the province and to look after their proper maintenance and control. Incidentally, most of the members of the *waqf* board and the employees 'sincerely believed' in the redundancy of the Sufi institutions. From day one, they started their work with an aggressive attitude towards the *ma'âfî* holders when the registration of the *waqf* was to be done. By now, the fine distinction between the personal property and the *waqf* property had been blurred due to the long continuous use of that property. It was very difficult for the *mutawallî*s [i.e. those in charge of the administration of a *khânaqâh*] and *sajjâda nishîn*s [literally, those who sit on the mattress/prayer rug; technically, the person around whom all the activities of the institution revolves, the spiritual and the temporal needs of the *khânaqâh*, an office which was not necessarily hereditary] to maintain and render accounts separately to an external agency like *waqf* board, which comprised people who were seen by them as opposed to 'their creed.' Thus started a long-drawn phase of litigation and manipulations by the *waqf* officials, appointing different 'committees,' superseding the earlier ones; this became the saga of an 'institutional onslaught' to purge the Sufi institution from the 'mismanagement' and 'misuse' of financial resources. It is another issue that, after independence and the above-mentioned Zamindari Abolition Act, *waqf* boards have been more concerned with augmenting their income by the sale, mortgage and lease of the *waqf* properties to the individuals, government and semi-government agencies.

A perusal of the records of the litigations itself—preserved in the 'family archives' of the various *khânaqâh*s and the files of the civil litigation kept in the various district civil courts and in the office of the *waqf* board—offers quite interesting and insightful details as to how institutions which left their imprints on the cultural and the intellectual landscape have been gradually reduced to a shadow of their former selves after the country attained independence from British rule.

For example, in the family papers of a Sufi institution we come across an interesting reference which gives us an idea as to how such institutions were treated by the new colonial policy makers. The statistical data relates to a *pargana* [i.e. a sub-division of a district] in Ra'e Baraylî district and provides information on the percentage of revenue-free holdings allowed by the British for the education of 'Mohammedans.' This 'Mohammedan Education' signifies instruction in the study

of Muslim theology and that too at a very rudimentary level. Out of 16 villages assessed as having land-revenue, only Rs 7,256 were meant for the 'education of the indigent Mohammedan boys (whose number in 1885 was only 39): construction and repair of the buildings; annual ceremonies of forefathers [i.e. celebration of the *'urs*, the anniversary of the day of demise of the saint]; feeding Mohammedan mendicants; greater portion of the income is paid as maintenance by decree holders to the several members of the family.'[7]

This information pertains to a well-known Sufi establishment of southern Awadh—the Khânaqâh-i kârimiyya at Salon[8]—which had enjoyed considerable landed properties since the time of the Mughal emperor Awrangzeb (d. 1707); its possessions had been enlarged during the period of the *de facto* reign of the governors/ministers [*nawwâb-wuzarâ'*] of Awadh between 1722 and 1856. Colonel William Henry Sleeman (d. 1856), the British Resident at the *nawwâbî* court, estimated the annual income of this Sufi establishment at about Rs 50,000 per annum. During pre-colonial times a substantial part of this income was spent on education, but things took a complete U-turn after the British annexation of Awadh. The new British civil laws compelled the individual members of the family to seek decrees for their personal shares. This ushered in a prolonged phase of litigation, which reduced the centrality of the institution, leading in turn to a reduction in the spending on social activities, and especially on education.

However, though the social obligations of the institution in the field of education appear to have reduced, the tradition of acquisition and dissemination of knowledge continued. One of the *sajjâda nishîn*s of the *khânaqâh*, Shâh Muhammad Mahdî 'Atâ' (d. 1900), was acknowledged as one of the most learned persons in the religious sciences and also recognized as a poet and an author of repute. Whatever knowledge he had acquired was within the four walls of the *khânaqâh* and he had never stepped out of it to obtain any 'formal' education elsewhere. His treatise on the teachings of *tasawwuf* called *Lam'at al-anwâr* [*Luster of Lights*], commonly known as *Hadiyya-yi hâmidiyya* [*Gift for Hâmid* (*'Alî Khân, his disciple*)],[9] is still recognized as one of

[7] Board of Revenue Files, Oudh General (1878), File Number unknown.

[8] For the history of this institution and the documents pertaining to it, cf. Jafri (1998: 117–144); Ja'farî (2003: 267–286).

[9] Shâh Mahdî 'Atâ' had prepared this treatise as a guide for spiritual training and the purification of the self [*tazkiyat an-nafs*] of his disciples. Hâmid 'Alî Khân

the basic works that provides an exposition of the teachings of the *Chishtî* order. His Persian and Urdu poetry is brimming with philosophical thoughts and with the tenets of high morality. The next *sajjâda nishîn* of the *khânaqâh*, Shâh Muhammad Na'îm 'Atâ' (d. 1966), had similarly never ventured out of the *khânaqâh* for any 'formal' education. However, he had acquired so much education that his contemporaries recognized his mastery of *hadîth*, grammar, prosody and literature. He once had to seek the opinion of his contemporary scholars about his status in the world of scholarship.[10] His contemporaries unanimously opined that he was undoubtedly one of the most learned persons of his times. Thus, despite the unsupportive attitude of the colonial masters and the curtailment of the frontiers for the spread of education, the high intellectual tradition of the *khânaqâh* was continued among the members of the immediate family; the casualty was only its public spread, for which situation the colonial masters were very much responsible.

This process—maintaining a distinction between 'modern' and *madrasa* education—was not reversed even after independence due to a 'variety of reasons.' It is not just that the 'Muslim community' has kept itself away from 'modern education'; the colonial legacy has also contributed to this situation.

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Undoubtedly, the policies of the 'ruling regimes' had adversely affected the role of the *khânaqâh*s in disseminating education, but this is only one aspect of the problem. The other major aspect one would like to point out is the shift of paradigm introduced by the votaries of a new movement that took it on itself to purge Islam of all 'innovations'

(d. 1952/1953), after whom the book was named as a gesture of affection, was one of his disciples.

[10] Shâh Muhammad Na'îm 'Atâ' was compelled to seek this opinion in view of a claim that he had submitted in a court of law. Being himself the plaintiff, he sought the opinion of others in order that the court may be able to evaluate his writings. He sought the opinion of his contemporaries by sending them a petition together with some books authored by him. It was these books that he then sought to submit in support of his claim in a court of law. The original petition is undated but appears to have been prepared around 1911; the manuscript lies with the present *sajjâda nishîn* of the *khânaqâh*.

[*bid‘a*]. They targeted the Sufi *khânaqâh*s as the centers which practiced the pluralistic ethos too liberally. Their practices were severely criticized and a strong plea for their reform was advocated. How far this newfound zeal of the votaries of 'reformist Islam' has been able to reform religion and society is open to debate. It has set out an agenda for itself, namely the paradigm of 'unauthorized and blameworthy innovation' vs. 'the sound way' [i.e. *bid‘a* vs. *sunna*], 'God's one-ness' vs. 'associationism' [i.e. *tawhid* vs. *shirk*]. Every adaptation and adjustment at the local and regional level by the Sufi *khânaqâh* in tune with local sensitivities (at times for ceremonial purposes only) was invariably dubbed as *bid‘a* by the protagonists of 'reformist Islam.' This attitude ultimately resulted in a situation where the old establishments of the Sufi *khânaqâh*s were charged with taking the tenets of plurality too liberally. Hence, their support base was slowly eroded. This created a vacuum, which had to be filled in by the new groups. These new 'ideologically inclined groups' sought to establish the *madâris* to promote their ideological inclinations and also looked for patronage only from their sympathizers. This sharpened the sectarian differences within Sunnî Islam, besides creating a new situation: now the *madâris* were invariably linked with the commitments of their donors. In all fairness, one should admit that it has been the practice since earlier times that a particular educational institution would propagate the 'ideology' of its funding agencies, but the situation now was qualitatively different. With an unfriendly and often hostile administration, the situation had become quite bleak for both. We are giving here just one, albeit highly illustrative example.

The Muslim World League [*râbitat al-‘âlam al-islâmî*], a Saudi Arabia-based transnational organization of Sunnî Muslims established in 1962, started a system to adopt the teachers of various *madâris* as its representatives [*mab‘ûth*] at exorbitant salaries. This system of '*mab‘ûth*-ship' created an atmosphere which was not congenial for the growth of *madâris*. Most *madâris* have stopped this system, but only after the damage was already done. The Hanbalî school of Muslim jurisprudence [*fiqh*]—predominant in Saudi Arabia—is totally opposed to the very notion of *tasawwuf*. It has always argued that *tasawwuf* was the sole reason for the decline of Islam. A large number of *madâris* funded by the Râbitat al-‘âlam al-islâmî bring out regular publications highly critical of Sufism and *khânaqâh*. Most of the graduates from these *madâris* openly preach against *tasawwuf*, often dubbing *khânaqâh* as centers of heresy and polytheism.

The *khânaqâh*, which was already facing hardships due to the colonial policies of the indiscriminate resumption of their *a'imma* or *ma'âfî* grants, became a soft target for the protagonists of 'reformist Islam.' The 'Hanbalî onslaught' in various garbs[11] has made things difficult for the survival of the institution of *khânaqâh* as vibrant centers of religious learning. Despite all this, there are still institutions like the Khânaqâh-i karîmiyya of Salon, the Khânaqâh-i mujîbiyya at Phulwarî Sharîf at Patna in Bihar, the Takîya at Kakori near Lucknow in U.P., Takîya Kalan or Da'ira Shâh 'Alamallâh in Ra'e Baraylî, and a large number of other places with similar traditions in. other parts of the sub-continent, too numerous to be listed here, which continue to be important centers of mysticism and learning. It should not be assumed that such an onslaught could diminish the impact of popular Sufism on the masses—the shrines [*dargâh*s] of Khwâja Mu'în ad-Dîn Chishtî (d. 1235) at Ajmer, of Shaykh Nizâm ad-Dîn Awliyâ' in Delhi, of Sayyid Salâr Mas'ûd Ghâzî (d. ~1030) in Bahrâ'ic, of Hâjjî Sayyid Wârith 'Alî Shâh (d. 1901) in Dewa, of Sayyid Badr ad-Dîn Shâh Madâr (d. 1435) in Makanpûr, as well as shrines at Gulbarga and various other places continue to attract pilgrims not in their thousands but in hundreds of thousands. This popularity is mainly due to the memory so deeply imprinted on the imagination of the people, that these are the places which have not only given them the message of peace and love contributing to spiritual solace, but have also contributed in the propagation of knowledge.

The *Khānaqāh* and the Intellectual Tradition in Southern Awadh

The manner in which traditional Islamic learning was acquired and disseminated (in the *ma'qûlât* and the *manqûlât* alike) by those connected with a *khânaqâh* will now have to be examined in some detail to bring out the arguments in the previous section. This examination will be based on a scrutiny of the family papers of the above-mentioned

[11] As 'Hanbalî onslaught' in India we consider all the arguments, which drew inspiration from the Hanbalite *Wahhâbiyya* movement in central Arabia, against certain Sufi practices, although the major protagonists do not follow the Hanbalî school. Rather they either don't follow any of the canonical schools of law (such as the Ahl-i hadîth, known as *ghayr-muqallidûn*), or follow the Hanafî *madhhab al-fiqh*, as the examples of Deoband and the Nadwat al-'ulamâ' provide evidence for.

Chishtî-Khânaqâh-i kârimiyya of Salon in Ra'e Baraylî district of present-day Uttar Pradesh, which have fortunately been preserved since the Mughal period through the *nawwâbî* era to the colonial period. Undoubtedly, Salon was one of the largest Sufi establishments of southern Awadh during the first half of the 19th century. It had maintained the tradition of acquiring and disseminating knowledge from its earliest days. A few glimpses from the biographies of its individual *sajjâda nishîn*s as well as their description in public records provide us with a feel of the close interaction this mystic establishment maintained with education, albeit not necessarily of the type imparted in the 'orthodox,' or rather conservative, *madâris*. Here the 'novice' as well as the 'scholar' was imparted education and training in spiritual and religious sciences in a manner which was different with each *shaykh*. After undergoing such rigors, some of them could become *shaykh* themselves. They were 'deputed' in their respective areas as the *khulafâ'* [sg.: *khalîfa*; deputy/successor/sub-head] to establish a center and to impart the same training and education to the other seekers [*tullâb*/sg.: *tâlib*]. Thus, it is not just the saga of a family but the study of its reach and the audience it has catered to for four centuries, as also the study of the whole milieu which provided solace and inspiration to the people of the area.

To begin with, the first encounter of the founder of this *khânaqâh*, Shaykh Pîr Muhammad (d. 1687), with Shaykh 'Abd al-Karîm of Mânikpûr (d. 1647), his spiritual guide-to-be, took place on his way to a *madrasa*. Here, Pîr Muhammad's future guide advised him to seek education from him rather than going to that *madrasa*. After some initial hesitation Shaykh Pîr Muhammad became his disciple [*murîd*] and it was under him that he completed his formal education in *fiqh* and *tafsîr al-Qur'ân*. Hence, Shaykh 'Abd al-Karîm was not only the spiritual guide but also the formal teacher of the traditional subjects. A contemporary verse figuratively describes him as the one who has 'spoiled scores of scholars and men of learning' [*sad-hazârân 'âlim-i 'allâma râ rindâna kard*].[12] Shaykh Pîr Muhammad himself went on to become the *shaykh*

[12] Despite the best efforts, it is very difficult to locate any contemporary writings on the life of Shaykh 'Abd al- Karîm Mânikpûrî. His biography is said to have been compiled in a book called *Chahâr 'aynâ* [*The Four Mirrors*] and in the *Latâ'if-i karîmî* [*The Subtleties of Karîm*] by the fifth *sajjâda nishîn* of the *khânaqâh*, Shâh Panâh 'Atâ' (d. 1860). The only surviving manuscripts of these works were taken over by the other branches of the family who are now settled in Pakistan. When they bring out the information contained in these

of more than 300 *‘ulamâ’*, some of whom had already become celebrities in the world of scholarship.[13] His *khânaqâh* became a center for the dissemination of traditional education and spiritual training and his fame even reached the ears of the Mughal emperor Awrangzeb (d. 1708). The latter invited the *shaykh* to Delhi but the invitation was

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manuscripts, it will add to our existing knowledge and, moreover, point to new dimensions in our understanding. However, whatever we know about him so far is only through family traditions. One of the disciples of Shaykh Pîr Muhammad, Sayyid ‘Abd as-Sattâr of ‘Alîpûr (in today's Sîtapûr district, Uttar Pradesh), has composed the following couplet which has been repeatedly copied in the later manuscripts and also survives in the memory of the people:

> The charm of my Pîr is manifest all over, [due to his charm] scores of scholars and men of learning have been spoiled;
> the son of ‘Âsif got intoxicated with the glimpse of Pîr Karîm; intoxicated in his love, people have gone crazy.
> [*Mastî-yi pîram dâr wa dîwâr râ mastâna kard, sad hazârân ‘âlim-i ‘allâma râ rindâna kard;*
> *Ibn ‘Âsif mast shûd az dîdan-i Pîr Karîm, mastî-yi ‘ishqash zih sar tâ pâ warâ dîwâna kard.*]

Similarly, the above-mentioned eighth *sajjâda nishîn* Shâh Na‘îm ‘Atâ’ has composed a number of eulogies [*manâqib*], both in Urdu and Awadhi, which made him a household name among the disciples of this order. However, his biographical details will give important clues in clarifying many issues.

[13] Shaykh Pîr Muhammad had appointed some important scholars as his *khulafâ’*. Among them was the already mentioned Sayyid ‘Abd as-Sattâr ‘Alîpûrî who compiled two books, known as *Fawâ’id-i karîmiyya* [*Useful Lessons of Karîm*] and *Bahr-i amwâj-i karîmî* [*The Ocean of Karîm's Waves*]. Cf. Qurayshî (1962: 1–26); Jafri (1992); Ja‘farî (2003: 23–39). Another deputy was Sayyid Sa‘dallâh Salonî (d. 1725/1726), who later on migrated to Sûrat where he established his own *madrasa* and became such an important scholar of comparative religion that it was said that, apart from the Muslim theologians, even the 'Jewish and the Christian priests used to take from him lessons on the Old and the New Testament' (Khân (1869–1974, II: 559); also cf. Jafri (1992); Qurayshî (1962: 1–26); Ja‘farî (2003: 23–39). Other *khulafâ’* of Shâh Pîr Muhammad that deserve to be mentioned are Sayyid ‘Alâ’ ad-Dîn Sandîlawî who established a *khânaqâh* at Sandîla in the Hardoi district in today's Uttar Pradesh; Dîwân Sayyid Badr ad-Dîn Ra’e Barelwî; Shaykh Abû Najîb Qalandar of Amethî in Lucknow district (who is said to have compiled the *Waqâ’i‘ najîbiyya* [*The Occurrences relating to Najîb*]); Shaykh Mu‘îzz ad-Dîn Karjâwî from Patna district in Bihar (he was the *Shaykh* of the founder of the *Khânaqâh-i mujîbiyya* at Phulwarî Sharîf); and last but not least his own son who carried on his educational and spiritual legacy, viz. Shaykh Muhammad Ashraf (d. 1754). Cf. Ja‘farî (1992: 248–255). (Also published in Ja‘farî (2003: 51–60); for the particular reference, cf. Ja‘farî (2003: 53).

politely declined, for no other reason than that he personally thought it better to maintain a distance from the court. The expression he used is in fact very interesting. He wrote, 'What a rustic has to do at the imperial court?' [*în dihqânî râ bâ bazm-i sultânî chi kar*]. He also reiterated his faith in *tawakkul* [i.e. unconditional trust in God] and added, 'His favours are sufficient for me and to strive for more will be useless ambition' [*karîm-i mâ bas bâqî hawas*].[14] It was probably afterwards, in 1676, that an imperial grant of the village Mîrzâpûr Bakhtiyâr in the dominion [*sarkâr*] Mânikpûr was conferred upon him. From the wording of the edict [*farmân*/pl.: *farâmîn*] it is apparent that the grant was personal in nature and involved no obligations to the Mughal emperor whatsoever. Instead of the standard formula used in other deeds for fief [*madad-i ma'âsh*, or *a'imma*-grants], a very high-sounding epigraph has been used in the grant under consideration. This was something unusual indeed to be issued from the Mughal chancellery. The imperial *farmân* says that it is being made by the way of 'an offering for the servants of one knowing the mystic truths' [*nadhr-i khâdimân-i haqâ'iq wa ma'ârif-i âgâh*].[15]

However, since its inception the grant was unfailingly utilized for purposes other than personal ones, a fact recognized in an official Mughal document: the *farmân* issued in 1709 by the emperor Bahâdur Shâh I (d. 1712) in favor of Shaykh Muhammad Ashraf, the next *sajjâda nishîn* of the *khânaqâh*. On the back [*dimn*] of this *farmân* a citation is made to the effect that:

> the grantee with a large number of mendicants is engaged in propagating the tenets of the *sharî'at* and *tarîqat* in the area and that in some of these villages he has established mosque, traveller's lodge [*musâfir-khâna*], and in the barren land has caused habitations to come up and has named them after his sons.[16]

During the 18th century, constant additions were made in the documents of the grants to this establishment, possibly with the same

[14] For the text of his letter to emperor Awrangzeb, cf. Ja'farî (2003: 268); for the translation, cf. Jafri (1998: 131).

[15] Jafri (1998: 48f.). For the text of the *farmân*, cf. Plate No. I; for its translation, cf. p. 131.

[16] Jafri (1998: 144f.). For the text of the *farmân*, cf. Plate No. III; for its translation, cf. pp. 133–136.

considerations in mind. Despite their sectarian differences, the nominally Shî'ite *nawwâb-wuzarâ'* of Awadh are also found to have developed a similar attitude towards the *khânaqâh* at Salon, so much so that by 1834 the establishment acquired such a standing that its *sajjâda nishîn* 'was called a fakeer though he was [the virtual] malik of Salon, and is said to spend only Rs. 100/- a month on his personal wants [...]'[17] and allotting 'the rest of his revenue which is Rs. 30,000/- a year to the entertainment of bairagees and fakeers [*bairagî*s and *faqîr*s; i.e. Hindu and Muslim itinerant mendicants] without distinction of religion [...] [he] spends his time in attending to their wants and in receiving visitors—Hindu and Muslim—from all quarters of the province.'[18]

The ethos displayed by the keepers of the institution remained its hallmark, despite the religious excitability of the Muslims of this region and of neighbouring Rohilkhand, aroused by Sayyid Ahmad of Ra'e Baraylî (killed 1831), as he and his emissaries were clearly told by the *sajjâda nishîn* that 'relieving and aiding the poor, the lame and the blind was more important than going for religious war or to work for reformist Islam.'[19]

The British resident at the court of Awadh, Colonel William Henry Sleeman, who undertook a tour of the *nawwâbî* principality between the years 1849 and 1850, confirms the above observations *in toto* and provides some additional details as well. He says that the then head of the *khânaqâh*

> is looked up to with great reverence by both Mohammedans and Hindoos, for the sanctity of his character and that of his ancestors [...] he never leaves his house but stays at home to receive homage and distribute blessings and food to needy travellers of all religions [...] [his grant is] said to yield him Rs. 25,000/- a year with which he provides for his family, and for needy travellers and pilgrims.[20]

Sleeman notes that in addition to his income from the land grants he used to get contributions from 'Mohammedan princes, in remote parts of India such as Bhopal and Sironge etc. Altogether his income is said

[17] Butter (1839: 139f).
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.: 164f.
[20] Sleeman (1858: 232–234).

to amount to Rs. 50,000/- a year.'[21] He maintained good working relations with the British authorities and was in correspondence with the Governor General of India and the Lieutenant General of the North Western Provinces and the British authorities of Awadh. He extended the usual courtesies to Colonel Sleeman too, who is on record saying that 'his character is held in high esteem by all classes of the people of whatever creed, caste or grade.'[22] Similarly a senior contemporary of Shâh Panâh ‘Atâ’, viz. Shâh ‘Abd ar-Rahmân (d. 1846), also known as *muwahhid* [i.e. one who believes in the one-ness of God], had visited him and stayed in his *khânaqâh* for about three months during the lifetime of his father, the fourth *sajjâda nishîn* of the *khânaqâh*, Shâh Karîm ‘Atâ’ (d. 1833). He praised him in 'superlatives' for his literary and academic accomplishments, besides the social obligations performed at this *khânaqâh* during the early 19th century.[23]

The person about whom Colonel Sleeman has spoken in such laudatory terms is the fifth *sajjâda nishîn* of this *khânaqâh*, Shâh Panâh ‘Atâ’. He was indeed one of the leading scholars of his time and had made a mark in the field of Arabic literature where he has four major works to his credit.[24] He is said to have compiled another 65 books (which possibly include some treatises [*rasâ’il*/sg.: *risâla*]) in the fields of history, *tasawwuf* and other branches of learning. He was in touch with his contemporary scholars and it is said that Shâh ‘Abd al-‘Azîz Dihlawî (d. 1827), Shâh Ismâ‘îl Dihlawî (killed 1831) and Mawlawî Rashîd ad-Dîn Khân were in touch with him on academic matters. It is also said that he wrote poetry in Arabic, Persian and Bhâshâ [Awadhî?].

However, despite their cordiality to the British, the leadership of the *khânaqâh*—viz. Shâh Panâh ‘Atâ’—never approved of the annexation of Awadh in February 1856 and did not in any way assist the British between 1857 and 1859. This was something the British authorities never forgot, and while deciding the fate of the land holdings of the institution during the first regular settlement in the area of Awadh in 1862, they had this memory at the back of their minds. Hence, moves were made to confiscate the properties but due to their strong social roots among the Hindus and Muslims these punitive measures could never be implemented; finally, all the grants had to be recognized and

[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Cf. Nûrallâh (1855).
[24] Cf. fn. 12.

released through a legal document [*sanad*/pl.: *asnâd*] dated September 26, 1862, and issued by Lord Charles Canning (d. 1862), the then Viceroy of India. It is pertinent to point out that the new grant was made a conditional one: it was to continue only as long as the income was devoted to the maintenance of the *khânaqâh*, buildings, tombs, mosques and the running of a school of 'Mohammedan Education' and continuance of the charities. The *sanad* is quoted in full to illustrate this point:[25]

> It having been established after due enquiry that Shâh Husain ‘Atâ held under-mentioned land in *tehsîl* Salon, *zilâ* Pratapgarh in rent-free tenure under the former government; the Chief Commissioner under the authority of the Governor General-in Council is pleased to maintain the tenure so long as the grantees perform their duties and keep up the buildings and school according to the terms of the grant on the following conditions:
>
> 1. that he shall have surrendered all *sanad*s, deeds and documents relating to the tenure in question;
> 2. that he and his successors shall strictly perform all the duties of land-holder in matters of police and any military or political service that may be required of them by the authorities;
> 3. that they shall never fall under the just suspicion of favouring in any way the designs of the enemies of the British government; and,
> 4. if anyone of these conditions is broken by the present incumbent or any of his successors, the tenure will be immediately resumed.[26]

To sum up what had been said so far, we can conclude that in the biographical outlines of Shâh Muhammad Panâh ‘Atâ’ he appears as a multi-faceted personality presiding over a historic Sufi institution, maintaining its pluralistic ethos, interacting with scholars and administrators, disseminating knowledge among the seekers, and attending to the visitors. Unfortunately, we lack the necessary details of his numerous pupils and disciples but the general references that we do

[25] For the above referred *sanad*, cf. also Anonymous (1927: 113–119) (i.e. Shâh Muhammad Na‘îm ‘Atâ’ vs. Muhammad Shams ad-Dîn); Liebeskind (1998: 96, 99, 124–176, 244, 256–262).
[26] Jafri (1998: 137–139).

have are important pointers in giving us a lead about the interrelationship that a *khânaqâh* had with the *madrasa* and the informal system of teaching evolved at the *khânaqâh-madrasa* centers during pre-colonial times.

The Impact of British Colonial Policies on the *Khānaqāh-Madrasa* System

The fate of this institution as a center for spiritual training and traditional education took many twists and turns during the colonial period. Immediately after the annexation of the kingdom of Awadh, the Summary Settlement began. The then *sajjâda nishîn* of the *khânaqâh* submitted all 31 *farâmîn*, warrants [*parwâna*s] and the title deeds for the entire holdings of the *khânaqâh*, and obtained a receipt for the same. However, during the events of 1857 the entire office records of the British were burnt, and the fire consumed these original papers as well. After the restoration of British authority on January 13, 1859, Shâh Husayn 'Atâ' (d. 1880) made a fresh application to the revenue authority in which, mentioning the names of the plots of land [*mawâdi'*/sg.: *mawdi'*], estates [*chak*s], etc., he listed all the properties belonging to the *khânaqâh* at Salon. He stated that these had been in the possession of his ancestors for the last six generations, and that the *farâmîn* and *asnâd* forming the title deeds of these properties had been delivered in 1856, before the uprising, to a Colonel Barrow who had issued a receipt for the same. The petition ended with the prayer that the properties be maintained as stipends or benefice-grants [*ma'âfî*] connected with the *khânaqâh*. Thereupon, an enquiry was instituted; during the course of this enquiry, Shâh Husayn 'Atâ' again submitted a memorandum on April 2, 1859, providing the details of the properties included in the endowment stating the origin of the title, the date of the grant and the duration of the petitioners' possession.

The Extra Assistant Commissioner's [EAC] decision on this petition, dated April 30, 1859, supports the claim of Shâh Husayn 'Atâ' and records the EAC's firm opinion that 'the ends of the charity for which these bequests have been made, be secured and the family so ancient and so esteemed be perpetuated. This being *wakf* property [...] mortgages and sales will not be recognized otherwise it will fast dwindle away.'[27]

[27] U.P. State Archives (1885: 25) [emphasis added].

This opinion, however, did not meet with the approval of the higher authorities. The Deputy Commissioner, on February 18, 1860, recorded thus: 'During the rebellion the present incumbent of these rent-free grants rendered the British government no assistance and cannot therefore be considered to have any just claim on our government [...].'[28] The Commissioner of Ra'e Baraylî district concurred with this opinion and, for good measure, added some punitive measures to the observations of his Deputy. He recommended:

> The incumbents of these rent-free grants rendered the British government no assistance during the rebellion [...] these 22 villages be granted in perpetuity on condition of (a) the offering of a *nazrana* [i.e. succession duty] of Rs 28,000/- by the grantee on the receipt of the Governor General's *firmaun;* (b) the payment of *nazrana* of Rs 28,000/-, one years rental by each of the successors [...]. As this is a trust fund, the government should reserve to itself the power of interfering in the expenditure, should it think proper to do so.[29]

Thus, the ground was laid for effective interference in the working of the institution. Moreover, this was not the only devise through which the incumbents of this grant could be taught a lesson; there was also the opportunity which came in the form of the 'crisis from within the family.'[30] After the death of the fourth *sajjâda nishîn* of the *khânaqâh* Shâh Karîm 'Atâ' in 1833, there arose a dispute among his descendants. To settle this the then government of Awadh appointed as the head [*nâzim*] of the area one Khâdim Husayn Khân. As a result of his intervention the parties reached a formalized mutual agreement [*sulhnâma*], dated September 10, 1835, to the effect that half of the entire property would remain in possession of Shâh Panâh 'Atâ', who would remain the *sajjâda nishîn* and would in that capacity pay out of his share the expenses of the *khânaqâh* connected with visitors and poor persons, while the remaining half of the property was to be equally divided between Shâh Ahsan 'Atâ' and Shâh Ghafûr 'Atâ'. This arrangement, somehow made to work perfectly, lasted only for a short time. The British intervened once more, seeking to undo it by

[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.: 26 [emphases added].
[30] Ja'farî (2003: 274–280).

issuing on September 26, 1862, a *sanad* for the entire property in the name of the then *sajjâda nishîn*, Shâh Husayn ‘Atâ’. The other branches of the family resented this, and rightly so. While these other branches continued to retain their possessions in effect, they were still forced to resort to legal action to counter the official *sanad*. A curious line of argument was taken in the case by the Deputy Commissioner, who, in his reply of June 6, 1863, stated that he saw no reason to accede to the request, as such *asnâd* have been generally understood to be merely renunciation of revenue by the government and not the title deeds for the individuals whose names they bear. Such an interpretation was unheard of in the legal history of the country. The decision was, of course, open to appeal, and an appeal was indeed made to the higher authorities. However, all of the revenue appellate courts, including those of the Commissioner, the Chief Commissioner, the Financial Commissioner, and even of the Secretary of the State upheld the decision of the Deputy Commissioner. One can only imagine the agony and the financial expenditure that the contesting members of the family must have undergone, leading to indebtedness and the mortgaging of the property. This must have been a phase when no one had the time to look out for the interest or the spread of 'Mohammedan Education.' In the light of this background, the observation, dated October 1, 1869, of the officiating Financial Commissioner is worth recalling here. He wrote: 'If the parties cannot agree, they can waste their substance in litigation. Their establishment is already a scandal and there can be no object gained by maintaining it.'[31]

It appears that the British authorities tacitly encouraged the litigation within the family. In fact, it was the Secretary to the Government who suggested to the petitioners the grounds on which they could approach the authorities 'for their rightful share'[32]—those of 'mismanagement and not fulfilling the conditions of the *wakf*'[33] by the main branch of the family. Thus, a fresh wave of litigations began on these grounds. A number of suits were filed in various civil courts, dragging the *sajjâda nishîn* and his family members into some of the most hotly contested cases ever in the area. The legal expenses were simply mind-boggling, and left all the parties in constant debt. The idea can be had from a table which has been included by Justice Sayyid Mahmûd in his

[31] U.P. State Archives (1885: 31).
[32] Ibid.: 33.
[33] Ibid. [emphasis added].

Memorandum of 1884 to illustrate that the *sajjâda nishîn* had a debt against the *ma'âfî* villages and his own personal debts totaling Rs 74,955, which was almost four times of his annual expected income from these villages. These debts were neither for the development of education nor for the maintenance of buildings (which were in bad condition) but were incurred to meet the legal expenses! Incidentally, the creditors included small peasants, boatmen and artisans from his *ma'âfî* villages.

Shâh Husayn 'Atâ' was a scholar of repute, with the privilege of having been taught by such celebrities as Mawlawî 'Abd al-Qâdir Dewî and Mawlawî 'Abd al-Bâsit Jaysî, both pupils of Shâh 'Abd al-'Azîz, the famous *muhaddith* of Delhi. Shâh Husayn was a poet too, who wrote poetry in Persian, Urdu and Bhâshâ; he was a *connaisseur* of music but circumstances forced him into a situation where the Deputy Commissioner of Ra'e Baraylî observed in a report dated January 7, 1875 that 'his style of living is by no means a moral example. He is now so embarrassed by debts that he repairs to Allahabad when he hears of the attachment out by creditors, and vice versa when claimants appear at Allahabad.'[34] It was also alleged that the debts incurred by him were due to mismanagement of the estate and that such loans were not raised for any purposes connected with the endowment. As a result of such adverse reports, the Commissioner Mr. Carnegie in his *Memorandum*, dated July 19, 1876, stated in no uncertain terms that 'it was improper that a man in this bankrupt condition should be left longer in uncontrolled charge of this important endowment [...] it must be placed in other hands than those of the present *Sajjada Nashin* [sic] or, at any rate, on quite a different footing.'[35]

In fact, the period between 1860 and 1880 has been dealt with in some detail here only to highlight the point that, had the British authorities shown some consideration to the mutual agreement of the family members, made way back in 1835, and endorsed by the EAC himself in 1859, there would have been little scope for the litigations leading to indebtedness. The non-participation during the 1857 revolt by the incumbents of this institution in terms of rendering any support to the British authorities was something that the British never forgot. Hence, in the process of punishing the individuals they destroyed an institution. It did not matter to them that at one point of time this very

[34] Ibid.: 35.
[35] Ibid.: 38 [emphasis added].

institution had earned laurels and applause from such diverse authorities as Donald Butter (d. 1877) who compiled his report in 1834, the above-mentioned Colonel Sleeman and Sir Charles Wood (d. 1885). It was left to Shâh Husayn ‘Atâ’ to express his anguish and lamentation by invoking the support of the Divine. Thus, he says in one of his couplets:

> It has been raining all the time; [I am] unable to see through,
> Husayn ‘Atâ’ has pinned his hopes on You; now help me.[36]

This somewhat rambling history provides a classic example of how a well-managed Sufi institution, and one symbolizing a pluralistic ethos and propagating the tenets of *sharî‘a* and *tarîqa*, can be reduced to such a position. But this is not all. We still have to see some actual instances of interference that dealt a severe blow to the system of education being propagated by this *khânaqâh* since the middle of the 17th century.

In the traditional educational set-up, Arabic grammar and books in Persian form part of the curriculum, besides the study of the Qur’ân and its commentaries. At the Sufic establishments the *shaykh* would like to teach similar things giving a different perspective—we know almost for certain that when Shaykh Nizâm ad-Dîn Awliyâ’ reached the *Jamâ‘at-khâna* of Bâbâ Farîd, he was known among his friends as 'the arguer' [*bâhith*] for his erudicate scholarship in the Muslim theological sciences; and yet he was instructed again on six chapters of the Qur’ân by Bâbâ Farîd. No details are available for the type of commentaries Bâbâ Farîd might have used. In all probability we can say that the peculiar mystic meaning ascribed to Qur’ânic verses might have been discussed.[37] Similarly, the oral tradition of the *khânaqâh* at Salon, which finds a mention in the public record of the colonial period from 1862 onwards, also says that Shaykh Pîr Muhammad, the founder of the *khânaqâh*, was doing advanced courses in theological studies when he 'incidentally' met Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karîm of Mânikpûr. The latter instructed the former in the spiritual sciences, details of which

[36] *Barsât rim-jhim sânjh sawere; sûjhat âr na par,*
Husayn ‘Atâ’ ke tum ho khiwayâ; ab to lagâo berâ pâ.

[37] Cf. Nizami (1991: 41f.).

are not available.[38] There is something which distinguishes the spiritual training and education of the *khânaqâh* from the traditional *madrasa* set-up.

Among the Persian literary texts, various books were supposed to give the beginners a fair idea of Persian diction, literary style and comprehension: the *Âmadnâma* [*Beginner's Guide*] of an anonymous author; the *Gûlistân* [*The Rosegarden*] and the *Bûstân* [*The Orchard*] of 'Sa‘dî' Shîrâzî (d. ~1291), as also his *Karîma* [*The Precious*]; the *Dastûr as-sibyân* [*The Constitution of the Boys*] of yet another unknown author; *Yûsuf wa Zulaykha* [*Joseph and Zuleika*] of ‘Abd ar-Rahmân Jâmî (d. 1492); the popular *Mîna bâzâr*, of which the authorship remains unclear too; and, finally, the *Sikandarnâma* [*The Story of Alexander*] of Abû Muhammad 'Nizâmî' (d. 1209). But to the British authorities this system was lacking not due to the inadequacy of the texts but on account of something other than that. The Director of Public Instructions observed with regard to one of the texts on November 12, 1874:

> It should be added that one of the Persian books used in the school, being a description of the loves of Joseph and Potipher's wife [i.e. Zulaykha] is an indecent book for boys to read, or rather it would be indecent if the boys understood the sense; that the Arabic taught is never understood at all; and if the boys do occasionally after several years' study, understand the Persian this effect is not due to any effort or skill on the part of teachers but to the mere mechanical exercise of constantly reading and repeating the text. The mode of teaching is really very bad.[39]

It is obvious that the focus is on rejecting the earlier system of education in favor of the newly established schools and colleges. The British colonial administration wanted such traditional institutions to be reduced to 'the *maktab* [which], would serve the purpose of a

[38] Cf. Ja‘farî (2003: 282f.). The document under consideration is titled *Iqrâr-i mâlik-i ma‘âfîdâr* [*Agreement of the Superior Rightholders by Way of Revenue-Free Land*], Vill. Barwaliya, *pargana* and *tahsîl* Salon, district Pratapgarh (Ra’e Baraylî), and it is included in the *Jild-i band wa bast-i awwal* [*First Volume of Revenue Settlements*] of 1860, regarding, among others, the *Kayfiyyat-i abadî wa husûl-i milkiyyat* [*The Details of the Settlement and the Acquisition of the Superior Land Rights*].

[39] U.P. State Archives (1885: 63).

branch school to the government main school.'[40] The bias is more than obvious: the people should be encouraged to join the new stream of education, rather than to remain with the traditional one.

* * *

The next *sajjâda nishîn* of the *khânaqâh*, Shâh Muhammad Mahdî ‘Atâ’, succeeded to the title at a time when the litigation within the family and the disputes with the government regarding the nature of the *waqf* property and the manner of its usage were among the issues hotly debated between the immediate members of the family, the distant relatives of the *sajjâda nishîn*, and between the British officers and the representatives of the *sajjâda nishîn*. No solution was coming up. The proposals made by the *sajjâda nishîn* to the government for breaking this impasse were summarily rejected. A study of these proposals reveals that he wanted a kind of centrality in any scheme the government might visualize for the institution in matters of management, curriculum and finances. He also demanded that some liability be fixed for the other branches of the family for their contribution in matters of education. The government wanted to carry out the principle of absolute control in all the above-mentioned matters and it summarily rejected all the proposals of the *sajjâda nishîn*. Finally, it was decided that in the Settlement Operations which were due in 1896 the entire '*Muafi* land was to be put for the reassessment of land revenue at the next revision of settlement of the district.'[41]

It appears that between the above-mentioned proposal of 1888 and the Settlement Operations the government changed its policy and instead of an outright resumption it went for an effective control of the administration and management of the *waqf* properties. Hence a scheme of administration was formulated in 1896, wherein it was decided that the entire income from the *waqf* properties was to be divided into five equal shares, out of which two shares were to be spent on the 'charities, education and for the maintenance of the buildings.'[42] Hence, one notices that the issue of 'Mohammedan education,' which should have been taken up separately by the government, has been invariably linked to the continuation of charities which included the annual rituals

[40] Ibid.
[41] U.P. State Archives (1888: 7).
[42] Ibid.: 9.

on the death ceremonies of the departed *sajjâda nishîn*s [*a'râs*/sg.:*'urs*] and the maintenance of the buildings. In such a scheme the education was bound to be relegated to the background, as the focus could now be easily shifted. With accounting and bureaucratic hassles it would have become further complicated. Definitely, the purpose behind the type of education to be imparted and the manner in which it was imparted to the inmates of the *khânaqâh* was no more the focus.

The head of the institution and their family members in their individual capacities continued to be recognized as 'scholars' and 'men of letters.' Their writings on the principles and the practices of *tasawwuf*, their commentaries on *hadîth*, their writings on Arabic grammar and syntax, and last but not least their devotional poetry in Persian, Urdu and Bhasha were highly appreciated and recognized by their contemporaries. The only thing missing was institutional support in their endeavors and curtailment of their resources.

It is perhaps most illustrative to examine the career of the immediate family members of *sajjâda nishîn* in the recent past, particularly those of Shâh Muhammad Husâm 'Atâ' (d. 1909–1910), the eighth *sajjâda nishîn* of the *khânaqâh* Shâh Muhammad Na'îm 'Atâ', and his younger brother Shâh Muhammad Halîm 'Atâ' (d. 1955).[43] All of them have been recognized in the world of scholarship as *muhaddithûn* [i.e. scholars of the *'ulûm al-hadîth*] and all of them wrote commentaries on the important *hadîth*-compendia (some of them were published while the others are still in the manuscript form). Among the published works of Shâh Na'îm 'Atâ', for example, are his commentaries on the *Sunan ad-Dârimî* from 1898, and on the *Muntaqâ al-ahkâm Ibn Jârûd* [*Ibn Jârûd's Selection of Rules*] from 1901. Although he was a follower of the Hanafî school of law, he made considerable deviations from it when he disagreed on the issue of the arbitrary pronouncement by the husband for the dissolution of marriage in one sitting [*talâq bi-th-thalâtha*], as well as on the question of the legal prohibitions of Sufi

[43] Very few biographical details are available either for Shâh Husâm 'Atâ' or for Shâh Halîm 'Atâ'. Cf. Nadwî (1993, I: 259–275). This is a very important article on Nadwî's personal reminiscences on Shâh Halîm 'Atâ', where he briefly discusses Shâh Husâm 'Atâ' as well. However, Shâh Halîm 'Atâ' has written elsewhere about the books he had studied and the persons from whom he has taken lessons. Moreover, he mentions the manner in which Shâh Husâm 'Atâ', his real uncle, and his elder brother Shâh Na'îm 'Atâ' have contributed to making him a scholar. Cf. Nadwî (2004: 123f.) for prefatory notes, and ibid., pp. 125–129, 295–305) for biographical and bibliographical details by the editor.

ritual music [*samâ‘*]. In defence of the Sufi tradition of *samâ‘*, around 1904 he wrote a short treatise titled *Kashf al-qinâ‘ ‘an wajh as-samâ‘* [*The Unveiling of the Mask from the Face of* samâ‘], where he forcefully argued in favor of Sufi music. Similarly, he criticized the Hanafî position on the issue of *talâq bi-th-thalâtha*. In 1910, finally, he wrote *al-Hijâj an-nâhida ‘alâ ’an at-talâqât ath-thalâta l-wâhida* [*The Rising Dispute on the Matter of Divorce by Three Pronouncements at the Same Time*], wherein he defended the anti-Hanafî position on the issue and argued that such an act of the husband should not be taken as the final dissolution of the marriage, but as only one of three steps in the process towards it. Incidentally, this was the well-known opinion of the anti-Hanafî jurists.[44]

In spite of his achieving such stature in the world of scholarship and agreeing in principle on a number of theological issues with the *muhaddithîn*, he was fully conscious of the limitations to which *tasawwuf* could be reconciled with other schools of Sunnî-Muslim jurisprudence. He was also aware of the interrelationship that the *khânaqâh* had with the *madrasa*. Thus, towards the close of his life he finally opined that:

> I learnt the nuances of Love with the tradition of sobriety of Junayd,
> but still I am deeply immersed in the traditions of [intoxication of] Shiblî and Bistâmî.[45]

The Khânaqâh-i karîmiyya as an institution got embroiled in a hotly contested phase of litigation with the U.P. Sunni Central Waqf Board in 1942, when the registration of the *khânaqâh* property was done at

[44] Some of these details I have already discussed in a similar manner in Jafri (1998: 143f.; 2005: 238f.).

[45] *‘Ishq ke madrase men mayn ham-sabaq-i Junayd thâ, Shiblî wa Bayazîd sâ ab bhî Na‘îm mast hûn.* For the full text of these lines, see Ja‘farî (2003: 39).

It is well known that in the early stages *tasawwuf* had developed the traditions of intoxication [*sukr*] represented by the famous Abû Yazîd Bistâmî (d. 875 A.D.) and sobriety [*sahw*] represented by Shaykh Junayd Baghdâdî (d. 910 A.D.). Seemingly they were antagonistic to each other but in the ultimate analysis they were one and the same in pursuit of the ultimate path. It seems probable that Shâh Na‘îm ‘Atâ’ wanted to highlight this point in the above couplet—that his stature in the world of orthodox scholarship should in no way be seen as something against *tasawwuf*. For him there was no contradiction.

the office of the Board. A regular civil suit was filed at the court of Sub-Judge, Pratapgarh, through which the then *sajjâda nishîn* Shâh Na'îm 'Atâ' challenged the registration of these properties as *waqf*; however, the suit ended in a compromise between the parties in 1946, wherein the *sajjâda nishîn* conceded that all these properties were *waqf* properties and subject to the provisions of the Waqf Act of 1936, while the Waqf Board acknowledged Shâh Na'îm 'Atâ' as the *sajjâda nishîn* and the *mutawalli* for his lifetime.[46] However, after some time the Waqf Board filed a civil suit for his removal as the *mutawalli*. The suit was partly decreed and the Civil Court itself worked out a scheme of administration, which was made part of the decree as well. Under the provisions of the said scheme a committee for administration was appointed with four members, Shâh Na'îm 'Atâ' as *sajjâda nishîn*, Shâh Muhammad Husayn Ja'farî as the 'would-be' *sajjâda nishîn* and two members from the side of the Waqf Board. But things were manipulated in a manner that gave the Waqf Board a free hand to interfere in each and every aspect of *khânaqâh* life. Petitions were encouraged, allegations were leveled and last but not least, even the family members of the *sajjâda nishîn* were persuaded to prefer the suits for their legal shares, technically known as *guzâra* [i.e. subsistence allowance out of the annuity] from the *waqf* property. Needless, to say that this phase had adversely affected the fortunes of the *khânaqâh* in the post-independence/post-Zamindari Abolition Act-era.

This scenario of litigation got further complicated with the death of Shâh Na'îm 'Atâ' in 1966. The succession of his nominee Shâh Muhammad Husayn Ja'farî (d. 1979) was challenged by other family members with the active connivance of the Sunni Central Waqf Board. Apart from the civil litigation, the issues of management were also raised in a manner which tried to create further complications for the ninth *sajjâda nishîn*, Shâh Muhammad Husayn Ja'farî. These negative measures of the Waqf Board could be stopped only when they were challenged in the High Court of Allahabad (Lucknow Bench) and the issuance of a writ of *certiorari*/*mandamus* had to be prayed for by the ninth *sajjâda nishîn*.[47] It is pertinent to highlight that the petitioner

[46] Case File of Regular Suit No. 5 of 1945 in the court of Sub-Judge, Pratapgarh (Shâh Muhammad Na'îm 'Atâ' vs. U.P. Sunni Central Waqf Board). The suit ended in a compromise on May 2, 1946.

[47] Writ Petition No. 143 of 1968 (Shâh Muhammad Husayn Ja'farî vs. President Sunni Central Board of Wakfs U.P. & others). The petition was withdrawn in

in this case was the eldest member of the family from the *khânaqâh*, who, in addition to traditional learning and spiritual training, had also acquired English legal education (B.A. [Hons.] and L.L.B. from the University of Lucknow in 1942). It was he who since 1942 looked after the entire litigation of the family against the Waqf Board. This has created a sort of 'personal animosity' against him, notably among the employees and the members of the Waqf Board but also among the various braches of the family and members of the so-called and pro-active representatives of the public, who had brought a number of representations against Shâh Na'îm 'Atâ'. Unfortunately, the close family members also played the most negative role, which has some-how 'strengthened' the designs of the Waqf Board.

In recent times Shâh Muhammad Husayn Ja'farî made the most sincere contribution in reviving the *madrasa/maktab* of the *khânaqâh* and tried to put things in order. But all his efforts were sought to be negated and undone by the Board. In fact, the Salon file contains extremely acrimonious correspondence between him and the officers of the Waqf Board in the period 1975–1979. The records in the files of the Salon Waqf at the Civil Court in Ra'e Baraylî between 1968 and 1975 (when the administration was vested by the Hon'ble High Court with the Civil Judge of the town) present a different side. The respective civil judges in their inspection notes during this period have lauded the efforts of the *sajjâda nishîn* in reviving the *madrasa*, the mainte-nance of the buildings and carrying out the charities. The Waqf Board, on the other hand, was making unsubstantiated allegations, forcing him to rebut them sharply.[48]

1975 as a result of a compromise, whereby the Waqf Board withdrew all the orders which had been challenged by the petitioner, and he was recognized as the sole *mutawallî* to manage the affairs of the *khânaqâh*.

Since the family members, at the instigation of the Waqf Board, also chal-lenged the succession of the petitioner, way back in 1966 the petitioner had to file a separate civil suit for the adjudication of his title in the Court of the Additional Civil Judge in Lucknow. However, his title could finally be decided only after his death when his nominee had already taken over as the tenth *sajjâda nishîn* of the *khânaqâh* (Regular Suit No. 31 of 1966: Shâh Muhammad Husayn Ja'farî [deceased], substituted by Shâh Ahmad Husayn Ja'farî, vs. Shâh Shabbîr 'Atâ' & Shâh Farîd 'Atâ') decided on December 12, 1984.

[48] File relating to *waqf* No. 14 of Ra'e Baraylî District with the Record Room of the Sunni Central Waqf Board in Lucknow. However, they have categorized the various files under this head as ground file, survey file, the file relating to the original papers and litigations, and the current files. They give a lot of

The death of the ninth *sajjâda nishîn* in 1979 offered the Waqf Board yet another opportunity to settle scores with the institution, and again a situation was created where the present *sajjâda nishîn* Shâh Ahmad Husayn Ja'farî (b. 1942) had to approach the Hon'ble High Court with a similar writ petition. In the interim order passed in 1982 the Hon'ble High Court has asked the Civil Judge of Ra'e Baraylî to look after the management of the *khânaqâh*, an arrangement which still continues and which, moreover, effectively debars the Waqf Board from interfering in the affairs of the *khânaqâh*.[49]

Until the promulgation of the U.P. Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act of 1952, the family continued to have possession of all these villages, though with some vicissitudes, especially through litigation. After the abolition of landownership [*zamîndârî*], an annuity was given by the Uttar Pradesh government only for the *ma'âfî* villages, and the amount was fixed at Rs 14,800 (being the net rental of these villages as it was in 1952, excluding the cost of collection) per annum. The net result of such a policy has been quite disastrous for the upkeep of the institution. The present *sajjâda nishîn* of the *khânaqâh*, Sayyid Shâh Ahmad Husayn Ja'farî Islâhî who is a scholar himself, has stated his views on the subject:

> It is unthinkable to manage such an institution in 2003 with the amount government has fixed way back in 1952 without any consideration to the price index and the rising cost of living, but since the traditions of *darwîshî* and *sultânî* [i.e. mendicancy and royalty] in the institution have to be maintained irrespective of the grants, it is now being sustained by Him who provides everyone the way He deems fit.[50]

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trouble when showing complete records. The court of the Civil Judge in Ra'e Baraylî, though, maintains a separate file relating to the affairs of the *khânaqâh* with the ground file of the Regular Suit No. 1 of 1950, decided on July 31, 1953 (Sunni Central Board of Waqf U.P., Lucknow vs. Shâh Muhammad Na'îm 'Atâ', *sajjâda nishîn*). As the Waqf Board has been effectively made defunct in matters of the Salon *khânaqâh*, so the office of the Civil Judge maintains an up-to-date record of the income and expenditure of the institution.

[49] Writ Petition No. 822 of 1982 (Shâh Ahmad Husayn Ja'farî vs. President U.P. Sunni Central Waqf Board & others).

[50] Jafri (2005: 233).

Conclusion

One notices that in the southern districts of Awadh, the Khânaqâh-i karîmiyya in Salon was a very important institution, providing spiritual training and imparting theological knowledge in a manner which was a hallmark of Sufi institutions from the times of Bâbâ Farîd and Shaykh Nizâm ad-Dîn Awliyâ'. The Mughal emperors and, thereafter, the *nawwâb-wuzarâ'* of Awadh had recognized the personal charisma of the *sajjâda nishîn*s and the uniqueness of the institution, and endowed them with huge landed properties, which were enough for their own maintenance and to discharge their social obligations. The pre-annexation British reports attest to the personal 'charisma,' 'scholarship,' 'spiritual prowess' and very strong social base that the institution had acquired—a prestigious position unparalleled in other similar institutions of the area. The custodians of this institution were utilising their resources and revenues for the propagation of mystic ideology and for the spread of education in a manner which could now be described as 'informal,' where there was little scope for 'passing out certificates' that could earn them some bureaucratic posting. This *khânaqâh* intended its inmates and visitors having some knowledge of theology and law to be trained in a manner which allowed them to acquire higher proficiency; thus, really going for the 'post-graduate creed of Islam.'

Of course, there were problems within the family before the colonial takeover, but they could be managed at the family level. After the annexation of the kingdom of Awadh by the British in 1856, things changed for the worse. However, they could maintain some of the lost ground, especially in their spiritual following, but they certainly lost in the social sector and especially on education and public welfare. This provided an opportunity for the new colonial masters to successfully erode the social basis of this *khânaqâh*. The maintenance of the *madrasa*, which was an integral part of this and other *khânaqâh*s, was no longer possible, as the family was deeply involved in litigation and disputes. This situation was bound to create a social vacuum, where the *khânaqâh* could no longer perform its traditional role. It was natural for the other outfits who stood for 'exclusivism and orthodoxy' to enter the fray for educating the people. These votaries of 'reformist Islam,' with whom the successive Waqf Boards were filled, were already equating the Sufi practices as *shirk* and *bid'a*; now the British administrators and thereafter the officials of the Waqf Board were

accusing them of mismanagement, financial irregularities and non-fulfillment of the objectives of the *ma'âfî* grant, and the family itself was involved in a most bitter dispute for their share in the *ma'âfî* and for a say in administering the institution.

Thus ended the saga of a glorious chapter in the history of the interrelationship between the *khânaqâh* and the *madrasa.* While the *sajjâda nishîn*, his brothers and other members of the extended family continue to serve the objects of the *khanaqah* in modest ways, the main casuality has been the institution and the masses that were the recipients of free education. Attempts by the current and the previous two *sajjâda nishîn*s of the *khânaqâh* to revive the tradition of having a *maktab* and a *madrasa* as a part of the *khânaqâh* could not go beyond a certain level, as with the rising price-index and the consistent interference by the Waqf Board it has not been possible for the *khânaqâh* to engage the services of teachers on a salary without government support. Even the *maktab* that was running quite effectively until the early 1990s is facing a difficult time. It is high time that the government and the people imbibe some awareness of the 'cultural heritage' of these institutions with a pluralistic ethos. Although the legacy and the memory of the Sufi tradition are still very strong, one should care for academic matters as well.

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4

Shī‘a *Madāris* of Awadh: Historical Development and Present Situation

SYED NAJMUL RAZA RIZVI

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SHĪ‘ITE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The development of the *madâris* as a stronghold of Sunni doctrine makes it understandable why they did not gain much importance among the Shî‘ites (i.e. the followers of ‘Alî and his descendants) in their formative period. Instead, they were guided by their *a'imma* [sg.: *imâm*], in its denomination of the *Ithnâ ‘ashariyya* (Twelver Shî a) until the death of the eleventh *imâm* Hasan al-‘Askarî (d. 873/4). The first *imâm* ‘Alî b. Abî Tâlib is believed by Shî‘ites to have been the originator of Arabic grammar and algebra. His sermons dealt with theological, philosophical and ethical matters.[1] The *a'imma* succeeding ‘Alî continued these traditions but are believed to have not been able to get enough time for the dissemination of their teachings, due to the strong political opposition from the ruling Sunnites and, related to this, their own untimely demise. However, the fifth *imâm* Muhammad al-Bâqir (d. 733) and the sixth *imâm* Ja‘far as-Sâdiq (d. 765) were able to get at least some time to concentrate on imparting education to the community. This might have become possible since the Umayyads did not pay a lot attention, as they were occupied with the intrigues and fights for survival in the last legs of their reign. The schools of Islamic jurisprudence [*fiqh*], *‘ulûm al-hadîth*, and Islamic philosophy [*hikma*] set up by Muhammad al-Bâqir and Ja‘far as-Sâdiq were declared open to all seekers of knowledge. Among those who benefitted from these schools were the founders of the Hanafî and the Shafi‘î schools of Sunnî *fiqh*. Alchemy was given a new turn by Jâbir b. Hayyân (d. ~815),

[1] Cf. Khan (1994–1995: 3).

who is referred to as 'Geber' in the Western world and is considered the father of chemistry. He is said to have been a disciple of *imâm* Muhammad al-Bâqir[2] and has expressed his indebtedness to Ja‘far as Sâdiq in a number of his treatises. These scholars in turn used to transmit knowledge in their own spheres.

The Shî‘ites fared no better under the Abbasids. The Abbasid caliph al-Ma’mûn went so far to proclaim himself as apparent heir of the eighth *imâm* ‘Alî ar-Ridâ (d. 818), but this proved of no permanent avail. The caliph al-Mutawakkil resumed the early practice of persecuting the Shî‘ites. The general hostility led the Shî‘ites to the adoption of the principle of dissimulation [*taqiyya*].[3] However, Shî‘ites were guided by their *a’imma* up to 941 AD when the twelfth and last infallible *imâm* Muhammad al-Mahdî disappeared into the 'Greater Occultation' [*al-ghayba al-kubra*]. Afterwards Shî‘ites had to depend for guidance upon persons who did not share the privilege of the *a’imma* of being infallible. They were called 'deputy of the *imâm*' [*nâ’ib al-imâm*] or 'authorized instance' [*marja‘ at-taqlîd*] and made Baghdad their center. Due to their activities Shî‘ism was becoming popular in and around Baghdad. The sixth *nâ’ib al-imâm* or *marja‘ at-taqlîd*, the 'Shaykh at-Tâ’ifa' Abû Ja‘far Muhammad b. Hasan b. ‘Alî at-Tûsî (d. 1067), established a Shî‘a *madrasa* in Baghdad. However, this *madrasa* was burned down by Sunnites during a clash with the Shî‘ites soon after, and at-Tûsî was forced to leave Baghdad. In an-Najaf, where he took shelter,[4] he founded a new juridical seminary, the Hawza al-‘ilmiyya, which soon became the most famous center of Shî‘a learning in the world.[5] Apart from Baghad and an-Najaf, another center soon to become established as a Shî‘a center of learning was Qom, situated in central Iran.[6]

During the Shî‘ite Buyid dynasty in Iraq and Iran, which lasted from 932 to 1055 AD, Shî‘ite scholars developed a theology [*kalâm*] and principles of jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*] on their own and considerably challenged the so-far dominating traditionalism. The elaboration of the concept of *ijtihâd* [independent reasoning] on a rational basis, in opposition to the idea of *taqlîd* [i.e. following of an established

[2] Cf. ibid.: 3f.; Jafri (2000: 254f., 260, 292).
[3] Cf. Hitti (1977: 439f.); Rizvi (1986, I: 61–65); Arjmand (2004: 18–47, 60–78, 84–88).
[4] Cf. Naqwî (1413 AH: 12f.).
[5] Cf. Fischer (1980: 252).
[6] Cf. Naqwî (1413 AH: 12).

opinion] started a process that finally led to the division of the Shî'ite learned community into two groups: the *mujtahidûn* and the *muqallidûn*. Those who were formally trained in Islamic jurisprudence based on rational judgment were called *mujtahidûn*. *Muqallidûn* were those scholars who allotted the primacy in legal matters to the authority of the *hadîth*, or commoners without any proper training in legal matters.

The above-mentioned *madrasa* at an-Najaf established by the 'Shaykh at-Tâ'ifa,' which was, and still is, considered the major center of Shî'ite religious education, acquired special significance for the development of the principle of *ijtihâd*, whereby the scholar is able to interpret and deduce religious precepts from three sources—the Qur'ân, the *ahâdîth* of the Prophet and the Shî'ite *a'imma*, and their respective *sunan*. Such a scholar [*mujtahid*] expounds the application of Islam to the changing conditions of his times. Every member of the Shî'a sect is required to follow the teaching of a living *mujtahid*, whose teachings lose authority after his death.[7] Thus, the Shî'ites must always have a living *mujtahid*, who is in theory an embodiment of deep scholarship, original thinking and training in the thorough examination and analysis of religious precepts. *Mujtahidûn* also came to be known as *usûliyûn*, a name applied for the first time to scholars in the legacy of Muhammad b. an Nu'mân al-Hârithî—commonly known as 'Shaykh al-mufîd' (d. 1022 AD)—who pleaded against the overestimation of the handed-down word and for the dialectical method based on rational judgment. However, there remained a sizable number of Shî'ite scholars who stoutly rejected the idea of a *mujtahid* as a source of religious authority and would interpret the Islamic laws as per the description in Qur'ân, the Prophetic and Imamite *ahâdîth*, and the oral reports from the Shî'ite *a'imma* [*akhbâr*/sg.: *khabar*]. This section of the Shî'a scholarship became known as *akhbârî*.[8]

During the Safawid period between the 16th and 18th century, when Twelver Shî'ism was proclaimed the official religion in Iran, large numbers of eminent Shî'ite *'ulamâ'* from the centers of religious learning in Southern Lebanon and Iraq came to Iran where they were very instrumental in the establishment of Shî'a *madâris* that became famous centers of higher religious learning. In this regard we only mention the so-called 'School of Isfahan,' which revolved around the personalities of Mîr Dâmâd Astarâbâdî (d. 1631) and his pupil Sadr ad-Dîn Shîrâzî (d.

[7] Cf. Jamali (1998: 196ff.).
[8] Cf. Cole (1989: 17f.); Momen (1985: 223–225).

1640), commonly known as 'Mullâ Sadrâ.' This must be considered as a turning point in the history of Islamic philosophy. However, the position of the Iraqi *madâris*, which are centered about the most venerated sanctuaries of an-Najaf and Kerbala, remained superior in the eyes of the Shî'a community.

The History of Shī'a *Madāris* in North India (Awadh)

The history of Shî'a *madâris* in India is of recent origin. It is well known that the atmosphere during the medieval period was not congenial for the Shî'a faith. The correspondence between Mîr Yûsuf 'Alî Astarâbâdî and Qâdî Nûrallâh Shustârî (d. 1610) shows that, even in the reign of Akbar, Shî'ites were not in a position to abandon *taqiyya*.[9] Qâdî Nûrallâh Shustârî was killed during the reign of Jahângîr because of his writings.[10] Thus, there was no question of establishing separate Shî'a *madâris* in India. With the death of Awrangzeb, however, the Shî'ites acquired a position that more and more allowed them to express their faith openly. Finally, the establishment of Shî'a rule in the princely state of Awadh in the 18th century made it possible to establish Shî'a *madâris*. The first two *nawwâb*s of Awadh did not take interest in the field of education. Therefore religious education was imparted by the Farangî Mahall, the school of theology of Sunnî *'ulamâ'*. Kamâl ad-Dîn Haydar writes in his *Sawânihât-i salâtîn-i Awadh* [*The Auspices of the Rulers of Awadh*], 'Muslims in Lucknow were Shî'ites only for name's sake. Due to their ignorance they acted against the teachings of their faith. They did not appreciate the importance of their faith. Those who were familiar with it, owing to their education, they did not openly offer their prayers in congregation and deliver sermons.'[11] There was no Shî'ite *mujtahid*, nor a separate Shî'a *madrasa* and mosque in Lucknow. During the reign of *nawwâb* Âsaf ad-Dawla (reigned 1775–1797), Sayyid Dildâr 'Alî 'Ghufrân Ma'âb' (d. 1820), financed by Mîrzâ Hasan Ridâ Khân (the Deputy of the *nawwâb*; d. 1801), went for higher studies to Iraq and Iran. He studied in an-Najaf and Kerbala and in Mashhad in Eastern Iran. From Mashhad he returned home with certificates [*ijâzât*] from one Sayyid Mahdî Tabâtabâ'î and one Mîrzâ Mahdî Isfahânî to practice *ijtihâd*. He was the first Shî'ite *mujtahid*, who established

[9] Cf. Rizvi (1986, I: 358–363).
[10] Cf. ibid.: 376–383.
[11] Haydar (1896: 113) [translation mine].

separate congregational prayers for Shî‘ites with the approval of *nawwâb* Âsaf ad Dawla and his deputy Hasan Ridâ Khân. He was appointed as the first leader of prayers [*pîsh namâz*].[12] Sayyid Dildâr ‘Alî also started a separate *madrasa* of his own where he imparted religious education. *Nawwâb* Âsaf ad-Dawla had given him Rs 1,500,000 to purchase books on Shî‘ite theology during his educational travels.[13] Sayyid Dildâr ‘Alî also sent his pupils, numbering about 29, to different parts of the state for the propagation of the Shî‘a faith. Under his guidance, his eldest son, the 'Mujtahid-i ‘asr' Sayyid Muhammad (d. 1867), developed exceptional talents in the sciences of *hadîth*, Qur’ânic exegesis [*tafsîr*], scholastic theology [*kalâm*], principles of jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*], jurisprudence [*fiqh*], the science of biography [*‘ilm ar-rijâl*] and grammar [*qawâ’id*]. Therefore, at the age of 19, Sayyid Muhammad was granted *ijâzât* from his father and was entrusted with teaching responsibilities. His lectures on *fiqh* and other branches of learning aroused considerable interest in academic circles.[14] Sayyid Murtadâ Akhbârî (d. 1860), Mawlânâ Mîrzâ Muhammad Khalîl (d. ~1805/1806), Fakhr ad-Dîn Ahmad Khân alias Mîrzâ Ja‘far (d. 1815), Mawlânâ Yâd-i ‘Alî Naqwî (d. 1837), Mawlânâ ‘Abd al-‘Alî of Dewakhatta in Ghazipur (d. 1827) and his sons, Sayyid Ahmad ‘Alî b. ‘Inâyat Haydar (d. 1878) of Muhammadabad, Mawlânâ Ashraf ‘Alî of Bilgram (d. 1854), Mawlânâ Sayyid ‘Ibâdat b. Muhammad Najâbat of Amroha (d. ~1816), Sayyid Abû l-Hasan Abbû Sâhib Kashmîrî (d. 1895) and Sayyid Muhammad's son Sayyid Muhammad Qulî were other famous disciples of Ghufrân Ma’âb, who rendered great services in the field of Shî‘ite religious education.[15]

Ghufrân Ma’âb's sons and grandsons also trained a large number of *‘ulamâ’* and *mujtahidûn*. They increased the standards of higher Shî‘ite religious learning in India and tried to raise their standard of education to a similar level to an-Najaf, Kerbala, Qom and Mashhad. In 1812, Mîrzâ Qatîl wrote in his *Haft Tamâsha* [*Seven Pleasures*]:

> There had been scholars of *fiqh* in India, but they were not Shî‘a scholars. Now with the grace of God, they are also to be found. It was the result of the efforts of some those scholars, who went

[12] Cf. Cole (1989: 61–65, 127–130); Rizvi (1986, I: 128–131).
[13] Cf. Lakhnawî (n.d.: 14).
[14] Cf. Rizvi (1986, II: 139–140).
[15] Cf. ibid.: 146–156.

> to the countries of the *wilâyat* [a generic name for journey abroad, here meaning Iraq and Iran] and studied the religious sciences under the guidance of the *'ulamâ'* of those places. After they came back, they made these sciences popular in their native country. Some of those scholars, who appeared to be inferior in their erudition, were said to have been hundred times better than those who flourished during the reign of Shujâ' ad-Dawla and made tall claims of their scholarship in religious sciences.[16]

Sayyid Muhammad, the successor of Ghufrân Ma'âb, persuaded *nawwâb* Amjad ʻAlî Shâh of Awadh (reigned 1842–1847) to establish a *madrasa*. The *nawwâb* is said to have been a devout Shîʻite and an ardent follower of the religious leaders of this community. Therefore he set up an institution of Shîʻite theology called Jâmiʻ-i sultâniyya, or Madrasa-yi sultâniyya, or Shâhî madrasa, in 1843. The institution was originally accommodated in the mausoleum of *nawwâb* Saʻâdat ʻAlî Khân in Khâss Bâzâr (later known as Qaysar Bâgh). It was under the management of Ghufrân Ma'âb's son Sayyid Muhammad, whose nephew Mawlânâ Sayyid Muhammad Taqî, alias Mîrân Sâhib (d. 1872), was appointed principal [*mudarris-i aʻlâ*] on a salary of Rs 150 per month. Two posts of assistant principals [*nâ'ib mudarris-i aʻlâ*] were also created and the above-mentioned Sayyid Ahmad ʻAlî Muhammadâbâdî, a middle class landholder [*zamîndâr*] and a leader of the small town of Aʻzamgarh in the south of Awadh, was appointed senior assistant principal. The post of the second assistant principal was given to Muhammad b. ʻAlî Faydâbâdî, a close student of Lucknow's chief *mujtahid* Sayyid Muhammad Nasîrâbâdî (d. 1867). Besides these three administrators, 14 primary teachers, seven intermediate teachers and five advanced instructors were appointed to run the school. The pay scale for the teachers ranged from Rs 20 for the junior teachers of primary classes to Rs 40 for the intermediate teachers, and Rs 70 for the advanced instructors. Students were also given monthly scholarships ranging from Rs 4 to Rs 10. Twenty advanced students received Rs 10 per month each, 50 intermediate pupils were given Rs 6 per month each, and 125 beginners had to try to live on Rs 4 per month. The total expenses of this *madrasa* amounted to Rs 31,200 per annum. Of the five advanced teachers only a few can be identified from the biographical

[16] Qatîl (1875: 148f.) [translation mine]; cf. Umar (1993: 245 n. 316).

dictionaries. Their names are Sayyid Muhammad Siyâdat Amrohawî (d. 1849) and Sayyid Muhammad ‘Abbâs Shushtârî (d. 1888).[17]

Historical research provides evidence that the *madrasa* went through some important changes. For access to more and better facilities, in 1846 the government moved it to the Âsaf ad-Dawla's Great *imâmbâra* situated in the old part of the town. The faculty expanded from 29 to 38, though the number of students stayed at around 200. The *madrasa* had a boarding house consisting of 10 rooms under the charge of Muftî Muhammad ‘Abbâs. There is no list of the students who passed through the *madrasa* and the existing list of teachers often gives only a first name. The information available indicates that the *madrasa* functioned for upper- and middle-class Shî‘ites. Many of the teachers were small or medium landholders and others derived from high service families clustered around the court in Lucknow.[18]

Some information is available regarding the teaching methods and syllabus of the *madrasa*. Typical text books included an early Safawid period *usûlî* work on the principles of jurisprudence, a standard work on metaphysics in Arabic, Mullâ Sadrâ's commentary on an early philosophical handbook, a work by 'Sayyid al-‘ulamâ’' Sayyid Husayn Nasîrâbâdî (d. 1856) on law, and a late 18th century *usûlî*-commentary on law from Kerbala. The syllabus mixed works incorporated in the *dars-i nizâmî*, the teaching canon developed in the Farangî Mahall in the 18th century, with the central textbooks favored by or produced by the *usûlî* revival in Iraq as well as in Lucknow. The works mentioned in the autobiography *Life. Ya‘nî sawânih-i ‘umrî* of Sayyid Ghulâm Husayn Kintûrî, an eminent Shî‘ite scholar of that period very much concerned with reforms of the *madrasa* syllabi, are *Ma‘âlim al-usûl* [*The Abodes of the Principles*], *ash-Shams al-bâzigha* [*The Rising Sun*], Mullâ Sadrâ's *Sharh hidâyat al-hikma* [*Commentary on 'The Guidance of Wisdom'*] which is a commentary on a philosophical handbook, Sayyid Husayn Nasîrâbâdî's *Manâhij-al-tahqîq* [*The Methods of Investigation*] on prayers and Sayyid ‘Alî Tabâtabâ’î's *Sharh al-kabîr* [*The Great Commentary*].[19] Thus, it is not surprising that quite a

[17] Cf. Cole (1989: 204–206, fn. 24); Hasan (1983: 21f.). Rs 20, the minimum salary of a teacher, seems to have been quite enough in those days. Moreover, for these teachers the salaries were more of a perquisite than an income because they had landed property around their *qasabât* [sg.: *qasaba*].
[18] Cf. Cole (1989: 207f.).
[19] Cf. ibid.: 208 n. 36.

number of Shîʻites were to be found during *nawwâbî* times among the students at the otherwise Sunnite Farangî Mahall.

Developments after 1857

In 1857 the Shâhî madrasa was abolished by the British after the annexation of Awadh. As a consequence the Shîʻa studies in Awadh declined. The abolition marked a very important point in the history of Shîʻites because of its historical significance and because it had also put an end to the study of Shîʻite students at the Farangî Mahall,[20] thus opening up the opportunity for the increase of tension between Sunnites and Shîʻites in Lucknow, which culminated for the first time in the violent riots of 1911. Thus, the learned Shîʻite establishment was forced to work out alternatives in order to maintain religious education for their community after 1857.

The Madrasa-yi nāzimiyya After the shutdown of the Madrasa-yi sultâniyya, the Shîʻite *ʻulamâ'* first continued the religious teaching through private tutorage. Around 1872 Mawlânâ Sayyid Abû l-Hasan Abbû Sâhib, the above-mentioned son of Sayyid Muhammad b. ʻAlî Shâh Kashmîrî, had founded the Madrasa-yi îmâniyya as a center of higher learning. It turned out a failure and its founder became so disappointed that he wanted to move permanently to Iraq. Nevertheless, he eventually changed his mind.[21] In February 1890 he founded the Madrasa-yi nâzimiyya and made Mawlânâ Najm al-Hasan the director of the *madrasa*.[22] Mawlânâ Najm al-Hasan was born in 1863. He was the son of Sayyid Akbar Husayn of Amroha and the favorite disciple and son-in-law of Muftî Muhammad ʻAbbâs. After completing his higher education under these teachers, he was teaching Qur'ânic exegesis, *ʻulûm al-hadîth*, *fiqh*, *usûl al-fiqh*, literature and astronomy to higher level students. As director, the Mawlânâ made the college famous and Shîʻite *ʻulamâ'* from all parts of India came there for higher religious learning. He even had a new building erected for the *madrasa* on Victoria Street, Lucknow.[23] After his demise Muftî Sayyid Ahmad ʻAlî became the director. He was followed by Mawlânâ Sayyid Hâmid al-Hasan. After the latter's retirement, his son Sayyid Farîd al-Hasan

[20] Cf. Hasan (1983: 22, 176).
[21] Cf. Fâdil (1981: 49); Rizvi (1986, II: 155).
[22] Cf. Rizvi (1986, II: 155, 157).
[23] Cf. ibid.: 157.

became principal and is presently running the *madrasa* very successfully. Today the *madrasa* is financially aided by the Uttar Pradesh government: the principal, the 16 teachers, one clerk and three other people involved get their salaries from the government. About 150 students are studying in the *madrasa*. However, the higher section, which is run by Mawlânâ Hâmid al-Hasan, is unaided. The sources of income for the maintenance of the instruction are traditional Shî'ite means such as the 'share of the *imâm*' [*sahm-i imâm*], or naturalia [*fitra*] and the like. Admission is restricted to students belonging to the Twelver branch of the Shî'a sect. There is also a boarding house attached to it, providing free board to deserving students. It also boasts a well-equipped library.

The *madrasa* consists of two sections—secondary [*tahtâniyya* and *fawqaniyya*], and higher education. The secondary education career offers a nine-year course in the fundamentals of religion and elementary knowledge in arithmetic, geography, etc., whereas the latter is of 11 years' duration, instructing students in Islamic sciences like Qur'ânic exegesis, *'ulûm al-hadîth*, Shî'ite jurisprudence, dogmatics, grammar and syntax, logic and philosophy, Arabic literature, Islamic history, etc. The higher course prepares students for the degree of *qâbil*, *fâdil* and *mumtaz al-afâdil*, corresponding to Intermediate, Graduate and Post-Graduate degrees respectively of the U.P. State education system.[24] Earlier the papers for examinations were set by the *'ulamâ'* of Iraq (but later on it was not possible to continue the tradition for a number of reasons which we do not have time and space to elaborate), and now the papers are set by the Indian *'ulamâ'*. Many eminent Shî'ite scholars—Mawlânâ Maqbûl Ahmad of Delhi (d. 1921), Sayyid Farmân 'Alî, Mawlânâ Muhammad Bâqir (killed 1857), Mawlânâ Sâdiq, Mawlânâ Sayyid 'Alî Naqî, alias Naqqan Sâhib, who later became chair of Shî'ite theology at 'Alîgarh Muslim University, Mawlânâ Jawwâdî, and Mawlânâ Ghulâm 'Askarî—were students of this *madrasa* at one point in their lives.

The Sultān al-madāris In 1889 Mawlânâ Sayyid Abû l-Hasan Abbû Sâhib also established the Sultân al-madâris with the assistance of the Husaynabad Trust, originally brought to life by the late *nawwâb* Muhammad 'Alî Shâh in 1839, to replace the Shâhî madrasa, which was

[24] Cf. Desai (1978: 30). For the present syllabus, cf. this chapter, Appendix I.

founded by *nawwâb* Amjad 'Alî Shâh but was closed in 1857.[25] Abbû Sâhib was the chief patron of this institution.[26]

Sayyid Muhammad Bâqir Ridwî Kashmîrî, known as 'Bâqir al-'ulûm,' was appointed head of the *madrasa*. He took keen interest in its development. In the initial phase, classes were run at a new venue in the corridors attached to the Rûmî Dârwâza of the *Barâ imâmbâra* complex in Lucknow. In 1911, the Husaynabad Trust had the present site developed; the foundation stone for the building of Sultân al-madâris was laid by the then British Lieutenant Governor of United Provinces, Sir John Prescott Hevette. The imposing double-storeyed building with a large hall in its center with rooms and galleries all around was formally inaugurated by the Lieutenant Governor on May 21, 1913, on the day of Nawrûz, the ancient Persian New Year festival, which is nowadays celebrated by Shî'ites too. The building was constructed with the financial support of the *nawwâb* Mîrzâ Mahdî Hasan Khân (b. 1854), whose contribution had been due to the efforts of Sayyid Muhammad Bâqir Ridwî, the principal of the institution.[27] Another two-storeyed building designed on the lines of the main building was later built just behind it.[28] Bâqir Sâhib, who died on February 9, 1928, put much effort into raising the standard of teaching.[29] After his demise Mawlânâ Muhammad Hâdî became the principal and taught a number of famous 20th century *'ulamâ'*. He died on April 2, 1938, during a visit to Kerbala.[30] After him the headship of the *madrasa* devolved upon his successor Sayyid Muhammad and was then passed on to Mawlânâ Sayyid 'Alî who died in 1985. Finally, Sayyid Muhammad Ja'far became principal, a title he still bears.

Some information regarding the *madâris*' syllabus, teachers, teaching method and changes made in the term period to acquire certificates [*sanad*] have also been provided during a number of interviews with officials of the *madâris* under investigation. According to Mawlânâ Yûsuf Sâhib (d. 1940), a previous student of Sultân al-madâris, in the

[25] Cf. Rizvi (1986, II: 155f.). However, according to Mawlânâ Muhammad Ja'far Ridwî, the present principal and manager, it was founded in 1892. Cf. *The Hindustan Times*, Lucknow Edition, February 4, 1998.

[26] Cf. Rizvi (1986, II: 156).

[27] Cf. *The Hindustan Times*, Lucknow Edition, February 4, 1998.

[28] Cf. ibid.

[29] Cf. Rizvi (1986, II: 156); Ridwî (1424 AH: 10).

[30] Cf. Rizvi (1986, II: 156); Ridwî (1424 AH: 26).

beginning a teacher used to teach two classes but all the books were taught completely. A student used to get the *sanad* of *sadr al-afâdil* after completing five years' study. Sayyid Hâdî, Muftî Muhammad Husayn and Mawlânâ Sayyid Muhammad Ja‘far were the teachers for the classes of *sadr al-afâdil*. Wajâhat Husayn and Nâzim Sâhib were appointed as teachers after the retirement of Ja‘far Sâhib. In the first class Ibn al-Hâjib's syntax work *Kâfiyya fî n-nahw* [*The Sufficient in Syntax*], ‘Abdallâh Yazdî's logical commentary *Sharh at-tahdhîb fî ‘ilm al-mantiq* [*The Commentary on ‘The Instruction in the Science of Logic*], al-Abharî's *Hidâyat al-hikma* [*The Guidance of Wisdom*], and Muhammad ‘Alî Shîrwânî's work on literature *Nafahât al-yaman* [*The Scents of the Yemen*] were taught among others by Nâzim Sâhib. In the second class ‘Abd ar-Rahmân Jâmî's *Sharh Jâmî* on the *Kâfiyya*; the *Qutbî*, a gloss on Kâtibî's logical treatise *ar-Risâla ash-shamsiyya* by Qutb ad-Dîn at-Tahtânî (d. 1365); the *Durûs al-balâgha* [*Lessons in Rhetorics*]; and the *Mukhtasar Nâfi‘* and *Sharh Bâbî*, two works on dogmatics [*‘aqâ’id*], were taught by Hâdî ‘Asr Sâhib. Mawlânâ ‘Alî ‘Âbid, in turn, used to teach the grammatical works *Mizân as-sarf* [*The Measure of Morphology*] by Sirâj ad-Dîn al-Awadhî (d. 1357); Mullâ Hamza Badâ’ûnî's *Munsha‘ib* [*Ramification*]; and ‘Abd al-Qâdir Jurjânî's *Nahw-i Mîr* [*The Syntax of Mîr*] and *Sarf-i Mîr* [*The Morphology of Mîr*]; while another old teacher taught the *Hidâyat an-nahw* [*Guidance in Syntax*], believed to be a revision of the *Kâfiyya*.

Later, the study was divided into nine classes and teachers were appointed for each class. It was decided that the certificate of *sadr al-afâdil* would be awarded after two years study. (Earlier, a student would get this *sanad* after completing a three-year course.) What we have given above is the description of the personnel and syllabi of the year 1921–1922.[31] Notable among the teachers in this *madrasa* were Walî Muhammad, Sayyid ‘Alî, ‘Alî ‘Âbid, Wajâhat Husayn, Muftî Muhammad Husayn, Shâh ‘Abd al-Husayn, and Shâh Ghûlam Haydar. Sultân al-madâris was recognised by the British government in 1922. In 1972 it was affiliated to the Board of Arabic and Persian Studies in Allahabad. The U.P. government handed out a grant to the institution in the same year. The higher section remains unaided.

Sayyid Ahsan Mahdî Ridwî, who in 1982 took admission in class five of the Sultân al-madâris and passed the examination of *sadr al-afâdil*

[31] Cf. Husayn (1999).

in 1992, told me in a personal interview that each student of class five used to get Rs 30 per month as subsistence allowance [*wazîfa*], dependent, however, on his attendance. There was a fine of one rupee per day for being absent. Lodging in the hostel was free but the student had to arrange his personal bedding. In summer a cloth [*garha*] was provided to each student by the *madrasa*. Three students were put in one room. The allowance in class six was Rs 40, in class seven Rs 45 and in class eight Rs 50 per month. In 1986, when he took admission for the *sanad* of a *mawlawî*, the stipend was substituted by free food. After passing the *mawlawî* stage he entered the class of *‘âlim*. In 1988 he passed the examination to obtain the title of an *‘âlim*, which was conducted by the Allahabad Board. Then he passed the three-year course for the *sanad* of *sadr al-afâdil* in only two years, because there was a provision that a student may pass a two years' course in one year. In 1992 he passed the examination of *sadr al-afâdil*, which was conducted by the *madrasa* itself. The number of students who successfully passed this last examination was seven. Four among them passed in the first division and three in the second.[32]

Today the Sultân al-madâris is an outstanding Shî‘a *madrasa* of Lucknow which is imparting Shî‘a religious teachings to the community under the able guidance of Mawlânâ Sayyid Muhammad Ja‘far and his sons.

The Madrasat al-wā‘izīn In 1919–1920 Sir Muhammad ‘Alî Muhammad Khân, the late Râja of Mahmudabad, and his younger brother, the late Sâhibzâda Muhammad ‘Alî Ahmad Khân, established the Madrasat al- wâ‘izîn in order to train Shî‘ite preachers for missionary work. This institution specializes in and provides selective training to post-graduates or holders of diplomas in higher learning from the Shî‘a *madâris* like the Nâzimiyya and the Sultân al-madâris. It offers instruction in practical training as preacher [*wâ‘iz*], for which only such students as have acquired higher degree of religious knowledge, have flair for writing, possess a gift of expression and have some knowledge of fundamentals of rhetorics are eligible. The training is of three years' duration, split into three grades, each of which contains quarterly, half yearly and annual examinations. The candidates who qualify themselves with honours at the final years' examinations and complete two years practical experience while preaching become

[32] Interview conducted on June 20, 2004, in Gorakhpur.

eligible for the degree of a *wâ'iz*. There is a hostel attached to the *madrasa*, which provides modern amenities and food subsidy. The *madrasa* also has a fine library attached to it, which is called *Dhakhîrat al-wâ'izîn*.[33] Its missionaries took Shî'ism to Tibet, Burma and Africa and even some places in Europe. The *madrasa* has a publication department with its own press producing a monthly Urdu journal, *al-Wâ'iz*, and an English magazine called *The Muslim Review*. The major works translated into English and published by the *madrasa* are the Qur'ân, the *Sahîfa-yi kâmila* [*The Perfect Page*] and a section of the *Majâlis al-mu'minîn* [*The Gatherings of the Faithful*].

Mawlânâ Najm al-Hasan was its first principal. He guided the multifarious programs of the *madrasa*. In recognition of his services, the government awarded him the title of a 'Shams al-'ulamâ'.'[34] Among the prominent teachers of this *madrasa* were Mawlânâ Sayyid Sibt-i Hasan Lakhnawî, Mawlânâ Sayyid 'Abû l-Hasan Lakhnawî, Mawlânâ Muftî Sayyid Ahmad 'Alî Lakhnawî, Mawlânâ Sayyid Rahat Husayn Gopâlpûrî, Mawlânâ Sayyid Mumtâz Husayn, Mawlânâ Sayyid Diyâ' al-Hasan, etc.[35] At present Mawlânâ Wârith Hasan is the principal and about 10 students are studying there.

The disciples of Ghufrân Ma'âb and his sons carried the torch of knowledge to different parts of the country by establishing *madâris*. Mawlânâ Mîrzâ Muhammad 'Alî (d. 1872) set up a major Shî'a *madrasa* in Calcutta. His family originated from Kashmir but they settled in Lucknow in the 18th century. However, he moved to Calcutta (then capital of India) with Wâjid 'Alî Shâh, the last king of Awadh, who was a captive there.[36] Similarly, Jâmi'a mansabiyya in Meerut,[37] the Shî'a Arabic College in Lucknow, Wathîqa Arabic College in Faydabad, Jâmi'a imâmiyya and Jawwâdiyya Arabic College in Benares, Madrasa-yi nâsiriyya in Jawnpur, and the girl's college Jâmi'at az-zahra in Lucknow were established in the 19th and 20th centuries. However, this list is by no means complete, but only an illustrative one.

Present Developments

Even today, the Shî'a *madâris* award the highest certificate of a *fâdil*. The change took place in the shape of attaching an identifying prefix

[33] Cf. Desai (1978: 29).
[34] Cf. Rizvi (1986, II: 157f.).
[35] Cf. Desai (1978: 30).
[36] Cf. Rizvi (1986, II: 158f.).
[37] For more details, cf. Desai (1978: 31).

before *fâdil*. The certificate of *fakhr al-afâdil* is awarded by Madrasa-yi jawwâdiyya in Benares, while *sadr al-afâdil* is awarded by the Sultân al-madâris. The Madrasa-yi nâzimiyya awards the *mumtâz al-afâdil*. However, there are no provisions for studying abroad [*dars-i khârij*] in India, which poses an important problem since an *‘âlim* has to go to Iraq and Iran for the study of *dars-i khârij* in order to be able to become a *mujtahid*. That is why there is no *mujtahid* in India at the present time. Most Shî‘ites are the followers of Sayyid ‘Alî Husayn al-Husaynî Sîstânî (b. ~1930) of an-Najaf in Iraq, even though there are some *akhbârî*s in Southern India, particularly in Hyderabad.

The course content and methodology of imparting religious education and training is the same everywhere. All the *madâris* may show some independence and impart extra information, but according to God all of them are accountable for the community. This is true even for those *madâris* that have not accepted government aid. Grammar [*qawâ’id*], jurisprudence [*fiqh*], logic [*mantiq*], philosophy [*hikma*], astronomy [*‘ilm-i hay’at*], psychology [*‘ilm-i nafsiyât*], linguistics [*lughât*], rhetorics [*‘ilm al-balâgha*], mathematics, *tafsîr al-qur’ân*, and the history of Islam are the main subjects. Teaching of foreign languages is not included in the new syllabus of higher classes.[38]

The financial burdens of the Shî‘a *madâris* are borne entirely by the community in the form of *khums fitra*, alms and charity. There is a provision in Shî‘ite law that every Shî‘ite has to pay *khums* (20 percent of the savings) yearly, out of which the 'share of the Imâm' [*sahm-i imâm*] is 50 percent. This share goes to Shî‘a *madâris* and other social institutions with the permission of the *mujtahid*. At present most of the Shî‘a *madâris*, except the Madrasa-yi jawwâdiyya in Benaras, are government aided. Their syllabi are recognized by the government. They award certificates for every class. The teaching hours of these *madâris* are from 8 am to 12 pm. But they also claim the share of *sahm-i imâm* for the expenses of boarding and lodging of the students.

However, this account is of little relevance if we do not outline the place of *madâris* in modern times. Certain changes bear witness to the changing role of *madrasa* education in general and for Shî‘ites in particular. Shî‘ite *‘ulamâ’* do accept that the worldly sciences [*‘ulûm-i dunyâ*] are also essential for the survival and the instruction of the young generation. Therefore Mawlânâ Kalb-i Sâdiq, Mawlânâ Kalb-i

[38] For present syllabi of the Jâmi‘-i nâzimiyya and of the Sultân al-madâris, both in Lucknow, cf. the appendices of the present chapter.

Jawwâd and many others are trying to establish English schools, along with engineering and medical colleges. Mawlânâ Kalb-i Sâdiq has founded the Unity Public School and the Era Medical College in Lucknow. Mawlânâ Kalb-i Jawwâd, the guardian of the Shî'a orphanage [*yatîm-khâna*] in Lucknow, has permitted the students to study in the English schools, which are governed by the Central Board of Secondary Education (C.B.S.E.) and Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (I.C.S.E.), New Delhi. Similar attempts have been made in other parts of the country.[39] The efforts made by the late Mawlânâ Ghulâm 'Askarî are also commendable. On August 15, 1968, he founded the Tanzîm al-makâtib with the prime object of religious awakening among the members of the Shî'a community. This organisation started opening *makâtib* (sg.: *maktab*) and *madâris*, publishing religious literature, particularly *dîniyyât* books in different languages. *Dîniyyât* books in Urdu, Hindi, Gujarati and Bengali were published during the life time of the founder of the institution, but English versions could not yet be printed, for the reason that for the time being there were no proper translations available. However, Dr Sayyid Manzûr Naqî, who obtained his M.D. in New Jersey, USA, came forward to help and translated some *dîniyyât*-books of the primary level into English.[40] The institution has requested him to take the trouble of translating the remaining *dîniyyât*-books into English. Thus, the Tanzîm al-makâtib is rendering great service to the community according to the need of the hour.

Conclusion

The foregoing description has shown that the Shî'a *madrasa* education system developed in India only after the establishment of Shî'a state of Awadh. It has come of age by now owing to the fact that many reputed Shî'ite *'ulamâ'* have been trained in India. Religious education, to be brought to the majority of the Shî'ites with the help of the state, was never a reality in Awadh. The first *madrasa*, established in 1843, already faced closure in 1857; this also ended the independent Shî'ite state of Awadh, as it was now taken over by the British Crown. However, the trend and attention generated in this field with the emergence

[39] Cf. Naqwî (1992: 37f.).
[40] Cf. Sayyid Sâfî Haydar (Secretary of the Tanzîm al-makâtib), *Imâmiyya dîniyyât*, books for Class 3, Lucknow, June 1990.

of Sayyid Dildâr ‘Alî did not subside. The attention of past Shî‘ite rulers and influential Shî‘ite *ta‘alluqdâr*s, like the Râja of Mahmudabad, kept the spirit of Shî‘a *madâris* alive. The inbuilt system of *khums* among Shî‘ites was also responsible for significant financial support in running the *madâris*. In those days, the students in *madâris* were from the middle and upper middle classes; now the students in *madâris* have started to come from the economically very weak strata of Shî‘a society, including orphans who have no other way to get education. Thus the mass appeal has increased. This has caused a deterioration in the conditions of the Shî‘a *madâris* with respect to the number of staff, students, and infrastructure such as buildings and libraries.

* * *

Recently, *madrasa* education in India in general has been under attack for two reasons. First, for its orthodox syllabus, which is deemed unfit for keeping pace with modern developments and demands of contemporary societies. Second, because of the alleged links between *madrasa* education and the spread of orthodoxy and terrorism. As far as Shî‘ite *madrasa* education in India is concerned, there has not been much of a revision in the religious subjects of their syllabi, because there is no need whatsoever to revise subjects like *fiqh*, *‘ulûm al-hadîth*, theology and History of Islam—the source book for all these subjects, the text of the revelation, will essentially remain the same. However, what is required is the introduction of certain subjects which are very essential in the contemporary world and life. In addition to the teaching of religious knowledge, the syllabus should be designed so as to enable the graduates of a *madrasa* to find jobs in the public and private sectors, in order for them to be able to earn their livelihood. For this, subjects like natural sciences, modern mathematics, English and Hindi, and computer applications[41] should be included, along with the traditional subjects. Work in this regard should be taken up by the board

[41] Mawlânâ Kalb-i Sâdiq (b. 1938), one of the Vice-Presidents of the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board and eminent Shî‘ite cleric, has also suggested that Indian Muslims should not be guided solely by religious teaching in educating their children, but should impart worldly education to enable them to raise the standards of Muslim society. He has said, 'Computers are the need of hour and the Muslim society should encourage their children into pursuing this line' (*The Times of India*, Lucknow Edition, August 18, 2004, p. 4).

members and advisory committees of *madâris*. Both parts of the syllabus can coexist. However, the non-revision of the syllabus and its lack of relevance to contemporary society, as far as earning livelihood through *madrasa* education is concerned, have at least to some extent to be regarded as responsible for the present condition of Shî'a *madâris* in Awadh. Furthermore, the Shî'ites of India still have to depend upon the institutions of an-Najaf, Kerbala, Qom and Mashhad for *dars-i khârij*, the research level course, as none of the Shî'a *madâris* in India are as yet equipped with this facility. At present, most Shî'ite students are continuing their studies in Iran after doing the lower courses in India, even though some of those courses are perfectly available in India too, simply because the necessary placement services are not available in India. Shî'ites, living in large numbers in India, do indeed require a better educational system for their religious needs as well as for their social needs and should not be forced to depend on foreign *madâris*. Moreover, the Indian perspective in the development of the Shî'a faith as such can only be properly assessed if the Shî'ites have at least one indigenous *madrasa* of higher learning of the level of *dars-i khârij* or doctoral research. Such an indigenous institution of Shî'ite higher learning is thus required in India and efforts should be made in this direction to design courses with emphasis on the contribution of Indian Shî'ites in the field of education.

APPENDIX I

Current Syllabus of the Madrasa-yi nâzimiyya,
Victoria Street, Lucknow[42]

'Āliyya (10 Years)

Tahtāniyya (duration: 6 years)

Qur'ân, Dîniyyât, *Âmadnâma* of an anonymous author, *Gulzâr-i dabistân* of Siva-Narayana, *Hisâb-i basic*, Geography of the Province, General Science, Basic Hindi, Basic Urdu, English Reader.

Fawqaniyya (duration: 3 years)

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:
- *Bidâyat al-hidâya* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Hurr al-'Âmilî (d. 1688)
- *Tawdîh al-masâ'il* (Persian) of Sayyid Abû l-Qâsim Khû'î (d. 1992)

Logic [*mantiq*]:
- *ar-Risâla al-kubrâ fî l-mantiq* (Arabic) of Sharîf al-Jurjânî (d. 1413)

Grammar [*sarf wa nahw*]:
- *Sharh mi'at 'âmil* (Arabic) of Husayn an-Nawqânî (d. 1520)
- *Dastûr al-mubta'dî* (Persian) of Sâfî d-Dîn b. Nâsir Rudawlî (d. 1416)

Literature [*adab*]:
- *Nisâb-i fârsî* (Persian) of Dr Ghulâm Sarwar (b. 1926)
- *al-Qirâ'at ar-rashîda* (Arabic) of 'Abd al-Fattâh Sâbirî and 'Alî 'Umar Beg

Essay Writing:
- *Riyâhîn-i inshâ* (Persian) of an unknown author

World Geography [*'alamgîr*]:
- No particular text

Mathematics [*riyâddiyyât*]:
- *Îritmatik* (Urdu)
- *Aljibrâ* (Urdu)

[42] I am thankful to Janâb Shakîr Sâhib, the oldest teacher of the Madarsa-yi nâzimiyya, for giving me help in the preparation of the present syllabus.

Hindi (compulsory):
- No particular text mentioned

English (compulsory):
- *English Reader for Class 8* of an unknown author

Mawlawī (duration: 2 years)

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:
- *Tabsirat al-muta'allimîn fî ahkâm ad-dîn* (Arabic) of 'al-'Allâma' Ibn al-Mutahhar al-Hillî (d. 1325)
- *Irshâd al-ma'rid* (Urdu) of Sayyid 'Alî Taqî Tabassura

Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*]:
- *Mabâdi' al-usûl ilâ 'ilm al-usûl* (Arabic) of 'al-'Allâma' Ibn al-Mutahhar al-Hillî

Logic [*mantiq*]:
- *Sharh tahdhîb fî 'ilm al-mantiq* (Arabic) of 'Abdallâh al-Yazdî (d. 1574)

Philosophy [*hikma*]:
- *Hidâyat al-hikma* (Arabic) of Athîr ad-Dîn al-Abharî (d. 1265)

Grammar [*sarf wa nahw*]:
- *al-Kâfiyya fî n-nahw* (Arabic) of Jamâl ad-Dîn b. al-Hâjib (d. 1249)
- *Fusûl-i akbarî* (Arabic) of Muhammad Hâdî 'Alî Akbar Ilâhâbâdî (d. 1680)

Literature [*adab*]:
- *Azhâr al-'arab* (Arabic) of 'Abdallâh Muhammad b. Yûsuf

Sciences of *hadîth* [*'ulûm al-hadîth*]:
- *Jâmi' al-akhbâr*, or *Ma'ânî l-akhbâr* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. 'Alî b. Bâbûya as-Sadûq (d. 991)
- *Ma'rûf al-akhbâr* (Urdu) of Sayyid Dhû l-Fiqâr Husayn (d. 1960)

Science of Exegesis [*'ilm at-tafsîr*]:
- *Tafsîr Âsafî* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. Murtadâ Muhsin Fayd Kâshânî (d. 1679)

Rhetorics [*'ilm al-balâgha*]:
- *Durûs al-balâgha* (Arabic) by a collective of authors from the Jâmi'at al-Azhar (Cairo), edited by 'Abd al-Afdal Muhammad Fadl-i Haqq Râmpûrî

History [*târîkh*]:
- *Kitâb al-irshâd* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. an-Nu'mân 'Shaykh al-Mufîd'
- *Maqâtil Ya'qûbî* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. Ya'qûb (translated into Urdu by Mujtabâ Hasan Kânpûrî)

National Languages: Hindi or English (optional)

- No particular texts mentioned

‘Ālimiyya (duration : 2 years)

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:

- *Kitâb sharâ’i‘ al-islâm* (Arabic) of Najm ad-Dîn Ja‘far al-Hillî 'al-Muhaqqiq al-awwal' (d. 1277)

Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*]:

- *Ma‘âlim ad-dîn wa-malâdh al-mujtahidîn fî usûl ad-dîn* (Arabic) of Mansûr Hasan b. Zayn ad-Dîn al-‘Âmilî (d. 1602)

Logic [*mantiq*]:

- *Sullam al-‘ulûm* of Muhibballâh Bihârî (d. 1707)
- *Qawâ‘id al-mantiqiyya fî sharh ar-risâla ash-shamsiyya*, or *Qutbî*, of Qutb ad-Dîn Tahtânî (d. 1365)
- *al-Hadiyya as-sa‘îdiyya fî l-hikma at-tabî‘iyya* of Fadl-i Haqq Khayrâbâdî (d. 1862)

Philosophy [*hikma*]:

- *Sharh hidâyat al-hikma* of ‘Abd al-Haqq Khayrâbâdî (d. 1900)

Grammar [*sarf wa nahw*]:

- *al-Fawâ’id ad-diyâ’iyya*, or *Sharh Jâmî*, of ‘Abd ar-Rahmân Jâmî (d. 1492)
- *ash-Shâfiyya* of Jamâl ad-Dîn b. al-Hâjib

Literature [*adab*]:

- *Diwân Mutanabbî* of Abû Tayyib Ahmad al-Kindî 'al-Mutanabbî' (d. 965)

Sciences of *hadîth* [*‘ulûm al-hadîth*]:

- *Wajîza* (Arabic) of Bahâ’ ad-Dîn Muhammad b. ‘Abd as-Samad al-Hârithî (d. 1622)
- *Usûl al-kâfî* of Abû Ja‘far Muhammad al-Kulaynî (d. 940)

Science of Exegesis [*‘ilm at-tafsîr*]:

- *Tafsîr Âsafî* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. Murtadâ Muhsin Fayd Kâshânî

History [*târîkh*]:

- *Duwal al-‘arab* of Muhammad Muhyî d-Dîn al-Ja‘far 'Tal‘at-i Hazm'

Rhetorics [*‘ilm al-balâgha*]:

- *Talkhîs al-miftâh* of Muhammad b. ‘Abd ar-Rahmân 'al-Khatîb' Qazwînî (d. 1338)

National Languages: Hindi (Intermediate) or English (Intermediate)

- Books issued by the U.P. Government, Allahabad

Qābil (duration: 1 year)

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:

- *ar-Rawda al-bahiyya sharh al-luma‘ ad-Dimashqiyya* (Arabic) of Zayn ad-Dîn al-‘Âmilî ‘Shahîd ath-thânî’ (killed 1558)

Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*]:

- *Usûl al-Muzaffar* (Arabic) of Muhammad Ridâ al-Muzaffar (b. 1904)

Logic [*mantiq*]:

- *Sharh tahdhîb al-mantiq*, or *Mullâ Jalâl* (Arabic), of Jalâl ad-Dîn ad-Dawwânî (d. 1502)

Theology [*kalâm*]:

- *al-Jawhar an-nadîd fî sharh kitâb at-tajrîd* (Arabic) of 'al-‘Allâma' Ibn al-Mutahhar al-Hillî
- *al-Bâb al-hâdî ‘ashar* (Arabic) of 'al-‘Allâma' Ibn al-Mutahhar al-Hillî

Literature [*adab*]:

- *Maqâmât al-Harîrî* (Arabic) of Abû Muhammad al-Qâsim b. ‘Alî al-Harîrî (d. 1122)

Rhetorics [‘ilm al-balâgha]:

- *Nahj al-balâgha* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. at-Tâhir al-Husayn ar-Radî (d. 1016)

Astronomy [*‘ilm-i hay’at*]:

- *Sharh tashrîh al-aflâk* (Arabic) of Imâm ad-Dîn b. Lutfallâh Muhaddith Lâhawrî

Philosophy [*hikma*]:

- *Ifâdat al-qudsiyya* (Arabic) of Hakîm Muhammad Sharîf Mustafâbâdî

Essay-Writing:

- No particular works mentioned

Fādil (duration: 2 years)

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:

- *ar-Rawda al-bahiyya sharh al-luma‘ ad-Dimashqiyya* (Arabic) of Zayn ad-Dîn al-‘Âmilî 'Shahîd ath-thânî' (chapters on marriage and property)

Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*]:

- *Qawânîn al-usûl* (Arabic) of Mîrzâ al-Qâsim b. Muhammad b. Husayn al-Qummî (d. 1816)

Logic [*mantiq*]:

- *Sharh basît ‘alâ sullam al-‘ulûm*, or *Hamdallâh* (Arabic), of Hamdallâh Sandilawî (d. 1746–1747)

- *Sharh sullam al-‘ulûm*, or *Qâdî Mubârak* (Arabic) of Muhammad Mubârak b. Muhammad Dâ’im Gopâmawî (d. 1748)

Literature [*adab*]:

- *Hamâsat at-Tammâm* (Arabic) of Abû Tammâm Habîb b. Aws at-Tâ’î (d. 846) (*marâthî* and *nasîb*)

Sciences of *hadîth* [*‘ulûm al-hadîth*]:

- *Ghurar al-fawâ’id wa-durar al-qalâ’id bi-l-muhâdarât*, or *al-Amâlî* (Arabic), of Abû l-Qâsim ‘Alî ash-Sharîf al-Murtadâ (d. 1044) (10 *majâlis* [lectures])

Rhetorics [*‘ilm al-balâgha*]:

- *Nahj al-balâgha* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. at-Tâhir al-Husayn ar-Radî (from lesson 21 to the end)

Essay Writing:

- No particular works mentioned

Mumtāz al-afādil (duration: 2 years)

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:

- *Riyâd al-masâ’il al-ma‘rûf bi-sharh al-kabîr* (Arabic) of ‘Alî b. Muhammad b. ‘Alî 'Bahr al-‘ulûm' Tabâtabâ’î (d. 1815)
- *Farâ’id al-usûl* (Arabic) of Murtadâ b. Muhammad Amîn al-Ansârî (d. 1864)
- *Bahth az-zann* of an unknown author
- *Kitâb al-makâsib* (Arabic) of Murtadâ b. Muhammad Amîn al-Ansârî

Sciences of *hadîth* [*‘ulûm al-hadîth*]:

- *al-Istibsâr fîmâ ‘khtulifa min al-akhbâr* (Arabic) of Abû Ja‘far Muhammad b. al-Hasan at-Tûsî 'Shaykh at-Tâ’ifa' (d. 1067)
- *Furû‘ al-kâfî* (Arabic) of Abû Ja‘far Muhammad al-Kulaynî

APPENDIX II

Current Syllabus of the Sultân al-madâris, Arabic College, Lucknow[43]

Tahtāniyya (duration: 5 years)

Year 1: Hindi: *Gyân Bhâratî* (Vol. 1); *Basic English Reader* (Vol. 1); *Hisâb* (Vol. 1); Urdu; Dîniyyât; Qur’ân.

[43] I am thankful to Mawlânâ Muhammad Sâdiq Rizwî Sâhib of the Sultân al-madâris for helping me in the preparation of the syllabus.

Year 2: Qur'ân; Dîniyyât; Urdu; Hindi; *Hisâb*; General Science.
Year 3: Qur'ân; Dîniyyât; Urdu; Hindi; *Hisâb*; *Mashârit-i 'ulûm*; *Ma'lûmât-i a'imma*; Sports; P.T.; Natural Science.
Year 4: *Gulzârî-yi dabistân* (Vol. 1); *Minhâj al-'arabiyya* of Sayyid Nabî l-Haydar Haydarâbâdî (Vol. 1); *Âmadnâma* of an unknown author; Urdu; Qur'ân; Dîniyyât; Hindi; P.T.; Mizân.
Year 5: Qur'ân; Dîniyyât; Urdu; Hindi; Persian; Arabic; English; *Hisâb*; *Samâj-i 'ilm*; General Science; P.T.; Arabic Grammar: *Munsha'ib* of Mullâ Hamza Badâ'ûnî.

Fawqaniyya (duration: 3 years)

Year 1:
Literature [*adab*]:
- *Minhâj al-'arabiyya* (Arabic) of Sayyid Nabî l-Haydar Haydarâbâdî (Vol. 2)
- *Ta'lîm al-lugha al-'arabiyya* (Arabic) of Dr Muhammad Amîn Misrî (Vol. 1)
- *Gûlistân* (Persian) of Sa'dî Shîrâzî

Grammar [*sarf wa nahw*]:
- *Nahw Mîr* of Sharîf al-Jurjânî

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:
- *Tawdîh al-masâ'il* (Persian) of Sayyid Abû l-Qâsim Khû'î

Year 2:
Literature [*adab*]:
- *Minhâj al-'arabiyya* (Arabic) of Sayyid Nabî l-Haydar Haydarâbâdî (Vol. 3)
- *Ta'lîm al-lugha al-'arabiyya* (Arabic) by Dr Muhammad Amîn Misrî (Vol. 2)
- *Afsâna-yi bastân* (Persian) of Yûsuf Husayn Mûsâwî (d. 1972)

Grammar [*sarf wa nahw*]:
- *Nahw Mîr* of Sharîf al-Jurjânî (Vol. 3)
- *Pânj Ganj* (Persian) by an unknown author

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:
- *Tawdîh al-masâ'il* (Persian) of Sayyid Abû l-Qâsim Khû'î (Vol. 2)

Logic [*mantiq*]:
- *ar-Risâla al-kubrâ fî l-mantiq* (Persian translation) of Sharîf al-Jurjânî

Year 3:
Literature [*adab*]:
- *Ta'lîm al-lugha al-'arabiyya* (Arabic) by Dr Muhammad Amîn Misrî (Vol. 3)

- *Afsâna-yi bastân* (Persian) of Yûsuf Husayn Mûsâwî

Grammar [*sarf wa nahw*]:

- *Hidâyat an-nahw* (Arabic) of Anwar ʻAlî (commentary on *al-Kâfiyya fî n-nahw* of Jamâl ad-Dîn b. al-Hâjib)
- *Sharh mi'at ʻâmil* (Arabic) of ʻAbd ar-Rahmân Jâmî (on the *Mi'at ʻâmil* of Abû Bakr ʻAbd al-Qâhir Jurjânî [d. 1078])
- *Kitâb at-tasrîf*, or *al-ʻIzzî*, or *Mabâdi' at-tasrîf* (Arabic), of ʻIzz ad-Dîn Abû Fadâ'il Zanjânî (d. 1257)

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:

- *Tawdîh al-masâ'il* (Persian) of Sayyid Abû l-Qâsim Khû'î (Vol. 3)
- *Ahkâm al-islâm* (Persian) of Sayyid Abû l-Qâsim Khû'î

Logic [*mantiq*]:

- *al-Mantiq wa-manâhij al-bahth* (Arabic) of Muhammad Ridâ Muzaffar

Mawlawiyya (duration: 2 years)

Year 1:

Literature [*adab*]:

- *Majânî l-adab* (Arabic) published from al-Majmaʻ al-ʻilm al-islâmî, Lajnat at-tanzîm ad-darsiyya, Qom

Grammar [*sarf wa nahw*]:

- *al-Kâfiyya fî n-nahw* (Arabic) of Jamâl ad-Dîn b. al-Hâjib
- *Fusûl-i akbarî* (Arabic) of Muhammad Hâdî ʻAlî Akbar Ilâhâbâdî

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:

- *Tabsirat al-mutaʻallimîn fî ahkâm ad-dîn* (Arabic) of 'al-ʻAllâma' Ibn al-Mutahhar al-Hillî

Philosophy [*hikma*]:

- *Hidâyat al-hikma* (Arabic) of Waqâr ʻAlî Ashrafî

Metric [*ʻarûd*]:

- *Matn al-kâfî* (Arabic) of Muhammad Husayn Shamsî

Rhetorics [*ʻilm al-balâgha*]:

- *Durûs al-balâgha* (Arabic) of Taht al-Muhammad Zakî Bâshâ

Year 2:

Literature [*adab*]:

- *Azhâr al-ʻarab* (Arabic) of ʻAbdallâh Muhammad b. Yûsuf

Grammar [*sarf wa nahw*]:

- *al-Kâfiyya fî n-nahw* (Arabic) of Jamâl ad-Dîn b. al-Hâjib

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:

- *Tabsirat al-mutaʻallimîn fî ahkâm ad-dîn* (Arabic) of 'al-ʻAllâma' Ibn al-Mutahhar al-Hillî

Sciences of *hadîth* [*‘ulûm al-hadîth*]:
- *Jâmi‘ al-akhbâr*, or *Ma‘ânî l-akhbâr* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. ‘Alî b. Bâbûya as-Sadûq

‘Ālimiyya (duration: 2 years)

Year 1:

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:
- *Kitâb sharâ’i‘ al-islâm* (Arabic) of Najm ad-Dîn Ja‘far al-Hillî 'al-Muhaqqiq al-awwal'

Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*]:
- *Ma‘âlim ad-dîn wa-malâdh al-mujtahidîn fî usûl ad-dîn* (Arabic) of Mansûr Hasan b. Zayn ad-Dîn al-‘Âmilî
- *Sharh al-wajîza* (Arabic) of Bahâ’ ad-Dîn Muhammad b. ‘Abd as-Samad al-Hârithî (d. 1622)

Literature [*adab*]:
- *Mansûrât* of ‘Abd al-Mâjid Nadwî

Logic [*mantiq*]:
- *Sharh shamsiyya*, or *Qutbî*, of Qutb ad-Dîn Tahtânî

Philosophy [*hikma*]:
- *al-Hadiyya as-sa‘îdiyya fî l-hikma at-tabî‘iyya* of Fadl-i Haqq Khayrâbâdî

Science of Exegesis [*‘ilm at-tafsîr*]:
- *Tafsîr Âsafî* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. Murtadâ Muhsin Fayd Kâshânî

Sciences of *hadîth* [*‘ulûm al-hadîth*]:
- *Usûl al-kâfî* of Abû Ja‘far Muhammad al-Kulaynî

Year 2:

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:
- *Kitâb sharâ’i‘ al-islâm* (Arabic) of Najm ad-Dîn Ja‘far al-Hillî 'al-Muhaqqiq al-awwal'

Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*]:
- *Ma‘âlim ad-dîn wa-malâdh al-mujtahidîn fî usûl ad-dîn* (Arabic) of Mansûr Hasan b. Zayn ad-Dîn al-‘Âmilî

Literature [*adab*]:
- *Diwân Mutanabbî* of Abû Tayyib Ahmad al-Kindî 'al-Mutanabbî'
- *Mansûrât* of ‘Abd al-Mâjid Nadwî

Logic [*mantiq*]:
- *Sullam al-‘ulûm* of Muhibballâh Bihârî (d. 1707)

Philosophy [*hikma*]:
- *Sharh hidâyat al-hikma* of Mîr Husayn al-Maybudhî (d. 1498)

Science of Exegesis [*‘ilm at-tafsîr*]:
- *Tafsîr Âsafî* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. Murtadâ Muhsin Fayd Kâshânî

Sciences of *hadîth* [*‘ulûm al-hadîth*]:
- *Usûl al-kâfî* of Abû Ja‘far Muhammad al-Kulaynî

Rhetorics [*‘ilm al-balâgha*]:
- *Talkhîs al-miftâh* of Abû Ya‘qûb b. Yûsuf as-Saqqâqî (d. 1229)

Sanadallāh fādil (duration: 3 years)

Year 1:

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:
- *al-Kitâb tajrîd al-‘aqâ’id* of Nasîr ad-Dîn at-Tûsî (d. 1274)
- *ar-Rawda al-bahiyya sharh al-luma‘ ad-Dimashqiyya* (Arabic) of Zayn ad-Dîn al-‘Âmilî 'Shahîd ath-thânî'

Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*]:
- *Usûl al-Muzaffar* (Arabic) of Muhammad Ridâ al-Muzaffar (Vol. 1)

Literature [*adab*]:
- *Nahj al-balâgha* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. at-Tâhir al-Husayn ar-Radî (Vol. 3)

Logic [*mantiq*]:
- *Sharh mutâla‘a l-anwâr* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. Muhammad Radî 'Mullâ Qutb Rânawî' (synopsis of the *Lawâmi‘ al-asrâr* of Sirâj ad-Dîn Mahmûd al-‘Urmawî (d. 1283))

Year 2:

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:
- *al-Kitâb tajrîd al-‘aqâ’id* of Nasîr ad-Dîn at-Tûsî
- *ar-Rawda al-bahiyya sharh al-luma‘ ad-Dimashqiyya* (Arabic) of Zayn ad-Dîn al-‘Âmilî 'Shahîd ath-thânî'

Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*]:
- *Usûl al-Muzaffar* (Arabic) of Muhammad Ridâ al-Muzaffar (Vol. 2)

Literature [*adab*]:
- *Nahj al-balâgha* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. at-Tâhir al-Husayn ar-Radî (Vol. 3)

Logic [*mantiq*]:
- *Sharh basît ‘alâ sullam al-‘ulûm*, or *Hamdallâh* (Arabic), of Hamdallâh Sandilawî

Year 3:

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:
- *ar-Rawda al-bahiyya sharh al-luma‘ ad-Dimashqiyya* (Arabic) of Zayn ad-Dîn al-‘Âmilî 'Shahîd ath-thânî'

Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*]:
- *Usûl al-Muzaffar* (Arabic) of Muhammad Ridâ al-Muzaffar (Vol. 3)

Literature [*adab*]:
- *Nahj al-balâgha* (Arabic) of Muhammad b. at-Tâhir al-Husayn ar-Radî (Vol. 3)

Sciences of *hadîth* [*‘ulûm al-hadîth*]:
- *Usûl al-kâfî* of Abû Ja‘far Muhammad al-Kulaynî

Sadr al-afādil (duration: 2 years)

Year 1:

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:
- *Riyâd al-masâ’il al-ma‘rûf bi-sharh al-kabîr* (Arabic) of ‘Alî b. Muhammad b. ‘Alî 'Bahr al-‘ulûm' Tabâtabâ’î

Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence [*usûl al-fiqh*]:
- *al-Kifâya fî usûl al-fiqh* (Arabic) of Muhammad Kâzim Khurâsânî (d. 1911) (Vol. 1)

Year 2:

Islamic Jurisprudence [*fiqh*]:
- *Kitâb al-makâsib* (Arabic) of Murtadâ b. Muhammad Amîn al-Ansârî
- *ar-Rasâ’il al-arba‘a*, or *Farâ’id al-usûl* (Arabic) of Murtadâ b. Muhammad Amîn al-Ansârî

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Part II

Regional Perspectives

5

The Nadwat al-‘ulamā’: Chief Patron of *Madrasa* Education in India and a Turntable to the Arab World

JAN-PETER HARTUNG

INTRODUCTION

On the night of November 21, 1994, a group of UP policemen, led by some officials from the Intelligence Bureau in New Delhi, invaded the campus of the *Dâr al-‘ulûm* of the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’, one of the most important institutions for Muslim higher religious learning in India. The police squad forced its way into the Athar Hostel, locked up most of the rooms were the students where asleep and started to ransack one particular room in search for evidence of an alleged connection between the *madrasa* and the Pakistani Inter Service Intelligence Agency [ISI], well known not least for its active support of militant Muslim groups in the Kashmir valley. The room was ravaged, seven of the students arrested without any warrant, and the warden of the hostel and other members of the teaching staff present at the scene were physically harassed. Before the squad left the campus without having found the expected evidence, its members started to indiscriminately use their firearms and, in doing so, hurt two students.[1] It is true that the Central government led by the United Front Prime Minister P.V. Narasimhâ Râo, as well as the UP Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadâv of the Samâjvadî Party, tried hard to convince the leadership of the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’ that they had neither ordered the night-time assault nor had any prior knowledge of it. However, the national media campaign following the incident did not cease to repeat unproved allegations, and, in doing so, managed to do serious damage to the high

[1] Cf. Nadwî (1415–1420 AH/1994–1999, VI: 42–46); Anonymous (1995: 5).

reputation the Nadwa enjoyed as a center of higher religious learning even beyond Indian borders.

The police raid belonged to an era when organized actions of communalist forces among the Hindu majority of the Indian population achieved their first major successes, barely two years after militant activists of Hindu communalist groups managed to raze the historical Bâbarî mosque in Ayodhya to the ground, with the tacit agreement of the then ruling BJP in Uttar Pradesh. Even though this government had been dismissed immediately after the demolition of the mosque, the destruction itself was perceived by large portions of the Hindu majority as the first great victory of Hindu communalism, and it opened up communalist rhetoric in all sectors of society.

The second incident that needs to be highlighted belongs to the time when the BJP had been firmly established as the ruling party at the center and in a number of important federal states, and had thus provided Hindu communalism with a powerful political means. On November 19, 1998, the ancestral home of the then head of the Nadwat al-'ulamâ', Mawlânâ Sayyid Abû l-Hasan 'Alî Hasanî Nadwî (d. 1999),[2] near Ra'e Baraylî was raided by a police commando and members of the family were harassed. This time the assault, which caused outrage among religious and intellectual elites all over the country irrespective of their respective religious creeds, was not linked to an allegation against an understanding between the Nadwa and foreign intelligence services, but rather against the scholar's open protest against the order by the BJP-led UP government to make the singing of the Hindu anthem *Vande Mâtaram* mandatory for all pupils in every state-administered school in Uttar Pradesh from October 1, 1998. Nadwî's urgent appeal to even withdraw Muslim children from such schools, along with the request by Muslim civil rights activists to have Nadwî as their leader in the protest against the unconstitutional order of the UP government, seemed to have been the trigger for the police raid, designed to systematically intimidate leaders of religious minority communities.[3] This cannot even be hidden by the fact that leading BJP politicians, among them the Prime Minister Atal Bîharî Vâjpayee, Union Home Minister Lâl Krishna Advâni and UP Chief Minister Kalyân Singh, publicly expressed their dismay over the incident.

[2] He will be named 'Nadwî' throughout the chapter for the sake of convenience.
[3] Cf. Anonymous (1998); Shahabuddin (1998).

Two intermingled points appear from both the given cases. The first is the question of why the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’ and its leading representatives were chosen in particular by the responsible authorities for leveling the accusation of subversive contacts with India's arch enemy state.[4] That is why this paper will investigate the history of this particular institution and highlight its extraordinary role in *madrasa* education in India.

Related to this question is the second point that appears from the above accounts on the two incidents in 1994 and 1998: There seems to be a history of accusations against *dînî madâris* in India of being breeding grounds for militant activities directed against the secular state as well as the Hindu majority of the Indian population. This rhetoric is primarily due to the increasing impact of Hindu communalist activities in more and more spheres of public life in India, at least since the era of Indirâ Gândhî's autocratic rule.[5] In the case of the Muslims it obviously came in very handy to link their attempts to handle their own communal affairs to the activities of foreign agencies, preferably from Pakistan or Saudi Arabia, insinuating that religiously educated Muslims in particular are more loyal to their brethren abroad than to the Indian Republic and its secular constitution. Indeed, there is, as we shall see later, a historical relationship between Muslim religious elites in India and other Muslim countries, above all in the Middle East. However, there will have to be a thorough investigation of what particular kind of relationship this is and where it is rooted. Moreover, one has to acknowledge that these relationships do not—by and large—exist between Muslim educational institutions in India and official institutions, particularly intelligence agencies, in these countries. On the other hand, they do exist between similar religious educational

[4] It has to be noted that the Nadwa did not (or only very marginally) come into public focus in the context of the allegations against *dînî madâris* in India post-9/11. Then, the attention shifted almost entirely to Deobandî *madâris* in bordering areas, highlighting the relationship between a certain Deobandî *madrasa* in Pakistan and the Afghan Tâlibân.

[5] Here one might recall that the Sikhs, yet another religious minority community, were also stigmatized as potential militants, aiming at the disintegration of the nominally secular Indian polity. This stigma was further reinforced by the activities of separatist groups, such as the Dal Khalsa, that led to the siege and, finally, the storming of the Golden Temple Complex in Amritsar in June 1984 by the Indian army, followed by the connected assassination of Indirâ Gândhî by one of her Sikh bodyguards.

institutions and between religious scholars for mutual benefit. The presentation of a small episode will prove to be highly illustrative of this fact, and will be dealt with later.

In 1917, the young Moroccan scholar Taqî d-Dîn al-Hilâlî (d. 1987) came to Cairo in order to study at the venerable al-Azhar. It was here that he was advised by the Azharî scholar ‘Alî Surûr az-Zankalûnî (d. 1940) to better go to India where the Egyptian scholar described the religious education as being much more organized and therefore effective. The Moroccan took the advise, went to India, and studied for a few years under such renowned scholars as ‘Abd ar-Rahmân Mubârakpûrî (d. 1933) and Muhammad b. Husayn al-Yamanî (d. 1925), the latter having been the teacher of Arabic language and literature at the *Dâr al-‘ulûm* of the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’ in Lucknow. Only a decade later, Taqî d-Dîn al-Hilâlî—one of the most luminous personalities in contemporary Islamic history—returned to India from Saudi Arabia, where he had been entrusted with the supervision of the teachings in the Great Mosque in Mecca by King ‘Abd al-‘Azîz b. Sa‘ûd (d. 1953) himself, in order to follow the footsteps of his own teacher Muhammad b. Husayn al-Yamanî as newly appointed teacher for Arabic language and literature at the *Dâr al-‘ulûm* of the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’ in Lucknow.[6] Very soon afterwards, and not least because of Taqî d-Dîn's involvement, this institution became—and now we are coming full circle—the major link to different strands of reform-oriented Muslim scholarship in the Arabic-speaking world, matched now perhaps only by the Jâmi‘a salafiyya, the current intellectual headquarters of the Ahl-i hadîth in Benares. How the link between the Nadwa, as a leading representative of Sunnî Muslim religious education in India, and Arab Muslim scholarship was established shall be the subject of a detailed analysis in the following chapter.

The National Council of Muslim Religious Scholars

The aftermath of the failed uprising against the British colonial power in 1857 is by and large considered a watershed, especially for the Muslims in the British crown colony and the two nation states established barely a century later on the same territory. Muslim religious scholars assessed the situation for the Muslim communities and considered the Muslims' deviation from the implications of the authoritative

[6] Cf. al-Majdhûb (1983: 196–198).

sources a major reason for the failure of the upheaval. It was in the first place a self-critical assessment, since the *‘ulamâ’* perceived themselves as guardians and administrators of religious knowledge—and implied that they had not succeeded in imparting this knowledge to the religious community in a way that was able to ensure their predestined position as vanguard of the entire society.[7] As a logical consequence of this, a considerable portion of the *‘ulamâ’* withdrew from the metropolis to the adjoining *qasabât* [sg.: *qasaba*] and set up religious educational institutions, aiming at a thorough reform of Muslim religious education. What developed from here was a wide variety of sometimes even diametrically opposed approaches, each and every one of them claiming absolute veracity. Two major tendencies could be singled out: a 'traditionalist' one, relying on the so-called 'transmitted religious sciences' [*manqûlât*], and a rather 'modernist' one, emphasizing the 'rational religious sciences' [*ma‘qûlât*] as the appropriate starting point for the integration of modern disciplines adopted from the West.[8]

There was, however, considerable some common understanding among eminent *‘ulamâ’* of all strands of Muslim scholarship that sooner or later these internal divisions would lead to a weakening of the Muslim community in India as a whole, because they would prove to be less competitive than similar educational endeavors among other religious communities, particularly among the Hindus, and by the British colonial establishment.[9] This in turn is why a great need was felt among Muslim intellectual elites to counteract the fragmentation of the Muslim communities under colonial conditions. In this colonial setting, and in particular in India, this was done in a rather integrative way: representatives of both the modernist and the traditionalist camps agreed upon the necessity of establishing a platform for all the current streams of Indo-Muslim scholarship, in order to sort out their differences and to finally work out a concept of reform that could harmonize diverse opinions. In order to fulfill these functions, the 'National

[7] This predestination is rooted in a number of Qur’ânic verses, such as 3:110: 'You are the best community that has been raised for mankind. You enjoin the good and forbid indecency and you believe in God.' [*kuntum khayra ’ummatin ukhrijat li-n-nâsi ta’murûna bi-l-ma‘rûfi wa-tanhuwna ‘ani l-munkari wa-tu’minûna bi-llâh*].

[8] Cf. Hartung (forthcoming).

[9] Cf. Jones (1989: 211–218).

Council of Muslim Religious Scholars,' the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’, was inaugurated in the *Madrasat fayd-i ‘âmm* in Kanpur in 1893 at a large convention of representatives of almost all the prevailing brands of Indo-Muslim reformist scholarship.

We will not dwell here on the internal tensions that dominated the early phase of the council and led very soon to the exclusion, or at least the marginalization, of a number of groups within the Nadwa, thus transforming the council into just another 'path' [*maslak*/pl.: *masâlik*] among the already existing varieties of Sunnî *masâlik*. Since the historical development of the Nadwa has been outlined elsewhere in greater detail,[10] we will focus on its institutional core, the *Dâr al-‘ulûm* already founded in 1898, but finally set up in 1908 in Lucknow. This seminary aimed at a reformed higher religious education that was, at least in the beginning, meant to harmonize the different and sometimes even conflicting approaches in reformist Sunnî Muslim religious education prevalent at that time. The curriculum that was to be taught at this almost paradigmatic institution was designed to set a standard for higher religious learning for Muslims all over India. This represented an attempt at a middle way between the 'traditionalist' teaching at the *Dâr al-‘ulûm* of Deoband and the more 'modernist' ideas on education elaborated at the 'Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College' of ‘Alîgarh. A driving force in the discussion for a reform-oriented curriculum for the *Dâr al-‘ulûm* of the Nadwa was Muhammad Shiblî Nu‘mânî (d. 1914), a previous companion of Sayyid Ahmad Khân (d. 1899) in ‘Alîgarh and an ardent advocate of the rational religious sciences.

National Muslim Education and the Global Muslim Community

Shiblî's role and influence in the formative phase of the Nadwa cannot be underestimated. He must be considered one of the major Indo-Muslim educationists at the turn of the 20th century, who was not only aware of the necessity for the reform of Muslim religious education in British India but also of the similar state of this particular field in other Muslim countries. In April 1892 he set out on a journey to the Ottoman Levant and Egypt, where he believed he could find the required sources for his work on his historiographical series *Heroes of Islam*.[11] In a few

[10] Cf. e.g. Malik (1997: 221–393); Hartung (forthcoming).
[11] Cf. Nadwî (1993: 191); Nu‘mânî (1999: 8).

months he visited renowned libraries and places of religious learning in Istanbul, Beirut, Jerusalem and Cairo and made contacts with eminent scholars. Apart from that, he critically assessed the state of religious education in the Ottoman empire, being particularly disappointed with the world-famous Cairene al-Azhar which was reputed as one of the educational centers of the Muslim world, besides the holy places in the Hijâz. In his travelogue Shiblî gave a detailed report on his findings, based on meetings with government officials from the educational department, his study of the annual reports and programs of different *madâris*, as well as his visits to a number of the larger *madâris*, libraries and Sûfî convents, and his talks with the teaching staff and administrators.[12] After all this, the only institution he considered appropriate during his entire travel was the Cairene *Dâr al-‘ulûm*, founded only in 1872 by the former Egyptian diplomat ‘Alî Pâshâ Mubârak (d. 1893) on the model of the *Écoles normales supérieures* in France.[13] The *Dâr al-‘ulûm* was established to enable students from al-Azhar to continue their education in modern branches of learning, in order to prepare them for employment in the jurisdiction or the new government schools. It was here were the Egyptian Grand-*muftî* and renowned reformist scholar Muhammad ‘Abduh (d. 1905), whom Shiblî happened to meet, taught for a few years.[14]

The talks with ‘Abduh and a number of other reform-oriented personalities in Egypt on educational issues seem to have considerably shaped Shiblî's ideas on a reformist curriculum, which he brought into the discussion in the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’: In order to 'set standards for achieving progress'[15] he emphatically stressed the necessity for the study of the English language, a new *kalâm*—just the way Muhammad ‘Abduh did—and finally a new historiography.[16] It was, just by the way, the last subject in particular that gained Shiblî lasting fame: He was and is considered the first modern Muslim historiographer in India, who tried to use Western historical methods in his endeavor to create a new Muslim historiography, as can be seen from the expansive preface in his biographical work *al-Fârûq* (1898) on the Umayyad caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azîz. In the expansive preface to this work

[12] Cf. ibid.: 43–66, 77–94, 126–143, 156–180.
[13] Cf. ibid.: 160–164; Jomier (1991).
[14] Cf. Nadwî (1993: 215); Nu‘mânî (1999: 194f.); Hourani (1962: 132f.).
[15] Troll (1993: 10).
[16] Cf. ibid.: 11–14.

Shiblî clearly highlighted the necessity of this subject for reformulating Muslim cultural identity in general and in South Asia in particular. He stated that a historical analysis of the Muslim past according to modern scientific standards should unveil the social and political conditions of the flowering times of a global Muslim culture, offering the possibility to compare prevailing social and political conditions in different Muslim societies. This comparison would in turn, according to Shiblî, lead to consideration of whether and how the historical conditions of an 'Islamic Golden Age' could be transformed into the present, in order to overcome what has been perceived as a cultural and political crisis of Muslim societies.[17] Shiblî's pragmatic approach to early Islamic history in turn reminds us clearly of the program of the Egyptian reformist movement of the *Salafiyya* at around the very same time, which was considerably sustained again by Muhammad ʻAbduh and his companions and pupils. What can be concluded from this similarities of the situation of Muslim religious education in India and the Ottoman Middle East is the following: at the end of the 19th century Muslim religious scholarship in different places found itself in similar situations, which called for a reassessment of religious education in order to stay competitive with alternative educational models introduced mainly by the respective colonial powers.

However, on a more idealistic level this similarity can even be traced to the postulate of the Muslim *umma* as a single community united in their faith [*al-umma al-wâhida*], authoritatively grounded in certain interpretations of a number of Qur'ânic verses, such as the above-quoted verse 3:110, and explicitly stated in a number of sound *ahâdîth*. It needs to be emphatically repeated that, according to the named Qur'ânic verse, the Muslim *umma* has been created as the best of all communities of mankind, destined to enjoin the good and forbid indecency. The permanence of the Qur'ânic revelation, which is considered by Muslims as the final, most perfect and undistorted revelation to man, can only be proven if spatial and temporal limitations can be transcended in order to redeem the postulate of the single Muslim *umma* unified in belief. Muslim reformist education, thus, had to withstand regional differences; in a famous Prophetic tradition one is called upon to 'travel for the sake of acquiring knowledge, and be it as far as

[17] Cf. Nuʻmânî (1898, I: 9–21).
[18] *Utlub al-ʻilm wa-law fî s-Sîn*. This very popular *hadîth* is not found in the six canonical collections and must therefore be considered weak [*daʻîf*].

China!'[18] The history of fruitful intellectual exchange between South Asia and Arabic-speaking countries in terms of religious education might to some extent serve as an empirical proof of this.[19]

However, there is a need to emphasize that such an unreserved positive attitude of Arab scholars to reformist Muslim religious education in India at the turn of the 20th century—like the above given example of ʻAlî Surûr az-Zankalûnî from the Cairene al Azhar—remained rather exceptional. Even though the process of globalization—very much impelled by the development and introduction of new means of transport and communication to Muslim societies—was responsible for the fact that the representatives of Arab Muslim scholarship could not help but acknowledge certain developments that took place in what was perceived by them as the periphery of the 'Islamic World'; yet they still maintained their historically developed attitude of superiority in religious affairs over non-Arabs.[20] That this attitude was, at least in the majority of the cases, not openly displayed goes without saying; however, the later developments in the relationship between the Nadwat al-ʻulamâ' and Arab Muslim scholarship provide some proof of this assertion.

Arabizing *Madrasa* Education in India: The Journal *ad-Diyā'*

As already pointed out, direct contact between the Indo-Muslim reformist scholarship around the Nadwat al-ʻulamâ' and the Egyptian *Salafiyya* around Jamâl ad-Dîn al-Afghânî and Muhammad ʻAbduh can be traced back to the 19th century, when Shiblî Nuʻmânî set out to evaluate religious education in the Ottoman Levant and in Egypt. However, it was Shiblî's most important pupil, Sayyid Sulaymân Nadwî (d. 1953), who managed to establish direct contact with the then central figure of the Egyptian *Salafiyya*, Muhammad Rashîd Ridâ, using the already existing personal connections of the above-mentioned Moroccan scholar Taqî d-Dîn al-Hilâlî, who was at around that time teaching Arabic at the *Dâr al-ʻulûm* of the Nadwa. In the course of this contact,

[19] Cf. Hartung (2004a: 86–91).

[20] As a good example for this might serve the fact that Muhammad ʻAbduh's most important pupil Muhammad Rashîd Ridâ (d. 1935) seems to have tried to play down the impact of his teacher's closest companion, the native Iranian Jamâl ad-Dîn al-Afghânî (d. 1897), on ʻAbduh and the reformist movement of the *Salafiyya*. Cf. Hourani (1962: 226, 230f.).

al-Hilâlî and Sayyid Sulaymân jointly founded the journal *ad-Diyâ'* that is considered the first Arabic periodical in India with some circulation. Even though we have evidence that this foundation was taken note of in Rashîd Ridâ's famous journal *al-Manâr*,[21] it appears that the Egyptian was not very much interested in a more intensive exchange of ideas. However, even though *ad-Diyâ'*, published only over a period of four years, it seems to hold a key position in the changes in learned Indo-Arab relations.

Especially in the volume of 1935, the year of Rashîd Ridâ's demise, the young Indo-Muslim scholars of the Nadwat al-'ulamâ' seem to have gained so much self-confidence that in his editorial in the first issue of that year, Sayyid Abû l-Hasan 'Alî Nadwî—that time only 20 years of age and the future head of the Nadwa—emphasized the important role of Indo-Muslim scholarship for the spatially invariant project of a conscious return to the ethical ideal of the 'pious elders', the *salaf as-sâlih*, by way of reformed religious education. Even though Nadwî did not give any particular names, he nevertheless took recourse to the ideals of the *Salafiyya* in the Arabic-speaking World and their journalistic efforts that were designed to put a stop to regressive tendencies within the Muslim *umma*. The journal *ad-Diyâ'* was, according to Nadwî, meant as an indispensable South Asian contribution to the reformist project of the *Salafiyya*, a project, in turn, that required the joint effort of the entire Muslim *umma*.[22] The articles published in *ad-Diyâ'* were very much concerned with the discussion of the role and position of the Arabic language for a reform of Muslim religious education in general, and in India in particular.[23] Here again the agenda of the scholars around *ad-Diyâ'* had much in common with similar discussions at the same time in the Arabic-speaking world. The debate between Rashîd Ridâ and the luminous Lebanese Shakîb Arslân (d. 1946) in their respective journals provides evidence of this fact, in the same way the Arab literary movement of the *Nahda* did at around the same

[21] Sayyid Sulaymân Nadwî's editorial to the first edition of *ad-Diyâ'*, 'Tulû' ad-Diyâ' [*The Ascent of the Light of ad-Diyâ'*], was identically reprinted in *al-Manâr* 32: 1 (1931), 346–351.
[22] Cf. an-Nadwî (1935).
[23] In this regard a few of al-Hilâlî's articles in *ad-Diyâ'* deserve to be mentioned: 'The Arabic Language and the Way of their Instruction' [*al-lugha al-'arabiyya wa-manâhij ta'lîmihâ*] (*ad-Diyâ'* 1:2 [1932], 23–29), or 'The Linguistic Utility: The Necessity of its Knowledge is Inevitable' [*fâ'ida lughawiyya: al-hâja 'ilâ ma'rifatihâ shadîda*] (*ad-Diyâ'* 2:2 [1933], 69).

time.[24] Similarly, the debate held in *ad-Diyâ'* was also reflected in the annual general meetings of the Nadwat al-'ulamâ' and the meetings of its advisory council in these years. Sound knowledge and command of 'good' Arabic, it was concluded, was inevitable for the preservation of a distinct religious identity. This was felt even more important after 1947, when the Nadwa had to deal with the new religious minority status of Muslims in the Indian Union under its secular constitution. It is thus not surprising that the learned leaders of the Indian Muslim community sought to establish even stronger ties with their counterparts in the Arabic-speaking world. In this process Nadwî was to become a key personality.

In this regard the strong connection between the Nadwa and the missionary movement of the Tablîghî Jamâ'at, which began in the early 1940s and is maintained until today, played a decisive part, since Nadwî himself developed into one of the major protagonists of the Tablîgh movement and put the Nadwat al-'ulamâ' into its service, especially when the decision was made by its then leader Muhammad Yûsuf Kândhalawî (d. 1965) in 1946/1947 to transnationalize the movement.[25]

Creating Stronger Ties with the Arab World

The kind of argumentation we have encountered in Nadwî's 1935 editorial in *ad-Diyâ'* was taken up by him again about a decade later in his pioneering Arabic book *Mâ-dhâ khasira l-'âlam bi-nhitât al-muslimîn* [*What had the World lost by the Decline of the Muslims?*] that was published for the first time in 1950 in Cairo. This time, however, the Indian scholar was taken note of by the Arab Muslim scholars and literati in such a positive manner that in the following period he managed to gain access to different learned and intellectual circles in the Middle East, culminating in spring 1962 in his appointment to the 'Consultative Council' [*al-majlis al-istishârî*] of the Islamic University of Medina, and in the 'Constitutive Assembly' [*al-majlis at-ta'sîsî*] of the Muslim World League [*râbitat al-'âlam al-islâmî*] in Mecca.

However, it should be emphasized that the Indian scholars' orientation towards the kingdom of Saudi Arabia was not least a result of their unease with the political situation in Egypt under Nasser. The

[24] Cf. Nadwî (1415–1420 AH/1994–1999, I: 116).
[25] Cf. Masud (2000: 12f., 25, 123f.); Sikand (2002: 69f., 104, 141 n. 30); Hartung (2004b: 258–263, 271–288, 322–329).

incorporation of al-Azhar and its attached institutions into the domain of the state by way of the treaty between the Nasser administration and the then *Shaykh al-Azhar*, Mahmûd Shaltût (d. 1963), was met largely with suspicion by the scholars of the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’.[26] In turn, the attempts of Saudi Arabia's political and religious leadership to establish hegemony by way of calling transnational conventions of Muslim dignitaries was perceived as attempt to safeguard the interest of the global, albeit highly fragmented, Muslim *umma*, as can clearly be proven from the personal correspondence of Nadwî and King Faysal b. ‘Abd al-‘Azîz of Saudi Arabia (assassinated 1975).[27]

The reputation acquired by Nadwî should not obscure the fact that, by adhering to the authoritative postulate of unity of and equality within the *umma*, he soon got into conflict with the regional and temporal political interests of other learned groups, particularly the scholars of the Saudi-Arabian *Wahhâbiyya*, but also other predominantly Arab *‘ulamâ’*, not least his own former teacher Taqî d-Dîn al-Hilâlî.[28] Nadwî seemed to have maneuvered himself into some isolation by sticking to ideals which he understood in an universalist manner and which were once shared by the protagonists of the Egyptian *Salafiyya*, and moreover because he repeatedly insisted on Islamic rule in accordance with the commandments of the authoritative sources to monarchs and heads of state in the Middle East and North Africa.[29] The increasing alienation of Nadwî from the Saudi religious establishment, especially after the violent death of his advocate Faysal, can be proven by the fact that most of the Arab notables that were invited to Lucknow on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’ in 1975, among them high-ranking religious scholars from Saudi Arabia, politely refused the invitation.[30] That the only guest from Arab

[26] Cf. Nadwî (1415–1420 AH/1994–1999, I: 474–476).
[27] Cf. Nadwî (1415–1420 AH/1994–1999, I: 482); an–Nadwî (1405/1984: 161f.).
[28] Here one may think only of al-Hilâlî's vigorous refutation of the Tablîgh movement in his book *The Shining Lamp in the Enlightenment of the Tablîghî Jamâ‘at on their Aberrations* [*as-Sirâj al-munîr fî tanbîh jamâ‘at at-tablîgh ‘alâ ’ahtâ’ihim*], published in 1979 in Casablanca, which had been highly acclaimed by the then Grand *Muftî* of Saudi Arabia, ‘Abd al-‘Azîz b. Bâz (d. 1999).
[29] Nadwî wrote letters of the indicated content to, for example, King Khâlid b. ‘Abd al-‘Azîz of Saudi Arabia and Crown Prince Fahd (cf. Nadwî 1415–20/1994–9, II: 276) and to the one-time Turkish prime minister Necmettin Erbakan (cf. ibid., VI: 296–299). During his travels to Morocco in 1976 he used a royal audience to urge King Hasan II (cf. Nadwî (n.d.), 99–102).
[30] Cf. an-Nadwî (1405 AH/1984), 50–52.

countries on this occasion were the later Egyptian *Shaykh al-Azhar*, ‘Abd al-Halîm Mahmûd (d. 1978),[31] and two controversial Hijâzî scholars on behalf of the Muslim World League,[32] seems to point towards severe tension between Nadwî and the state-supportive *Wahhâbî* scholars. As another proof we could observe that the Muslim World League never opened an official office in India, as opposed to, for instance, some Southeast Asian Countries or the Maldives. Thus, even though Nadwî remained a member of different transnational bodies towards the end of his life, the periodicals of these bodies shed quite some light on the fact that Nadwî's learned opinion was given less and less weight, and he was, eventually, forced to work out alternative strategies.[33]

Meshing New Nets

One strategy to overcome the increasing alienation of the protagonists of the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’ from the Arab dominated transnational Muslim scholarship was the establishment of the World League of Islamic Literature, the Râbitat al-adab al-islâmî al-‘âlamî, inaugurated in Mecca in 1984 primarily on Nadwî's initiative. The idea to set up such a permanent transnational body was traced back by Nadwî as far as 1956 when he was appointed member of the 'Syrian Academy of Sciences and Letters' by the then Syrian president Shukrî al-Quwwatlî (d. 1967). Three years before the League's official inauguration, the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’ had already held an international symposium on 'The Search for the Islamic Elements in Arabic and other Literature' [*‘Arabî adab men khusûsan awr dûsrî zabânon kî adabiyyât men islâmî ‘anâsir kî talâsh*]. On this occasion Nadwî had invited reputed representatives from different Arab countries, whom he came to know in the course of

[31] During the term in office of ‘Abd al-Halîm Mahmûd, who shared with Nadwî the latter's affection for an austere Sufism, the Azhar again became closer to the religious establishment in Saudi Arabia. In 1973, Mahmûd signed a treaty with the then Secretary General of the 'Islamic World League', Muhammad Sâlih al-Qazzâz (d. 1989), wherein he renounced to some extent the alliance between the Azhar and the Egyptian state, and subordinated the Azhar to the hegemony of the 'Islamic World League'. Cf. Schulze (1990: 275f.).

[32] Cf. Anonymous (1395 AH/1975). One of the two Hijâzî scholars, Muhammad b. ‘Alawî al-Mâlikî (d. 2004), who was strongly inclined to Sufism, was a few years later openly accused of heretic tendencies by leading *Wahhâbî* scholars such as Ibn Bâz.

[33] Cf. Hartung (2004b: 426–451).

his activities in the transnational context. Besides the Arab participants, Nadwî had managed to gather leading representatives of the Indo-Muslim scholarship, and that way had created convenient terms to succeed in securing formal appreciation of the literary and religious achievements of South Asian personalities by the representatives of Arab Muslim scholarship. In the course of this symposium, a list of Arabic and non-Arabic works, which were considered generally suitable for the study of Islamic literature [*adab*], was drawn up;[34] in this list the writings of authors from the Nadwa or from its immediate surroundings played a considerable role: *Hujjat allâh al-bâligha* [*The Conclusive Argument of God*] of Shâh Walî Allâh Dihlawî (d. 1762), the unfinished *tafsîr*, *Tarjumân al-qur'ân* [*The Translator of the Qur'ân*] of Abû l-Kalâm Âzâd (d. 1958), Sayyid Sulaymân Nadwî's *ar-Risâla al-muhammadiyya* [*The Muhammadan Mission*], the *Ta'rîkh ad-da'wa al-islamiyya fî sibh al-qâra al-hindiyya* [*The History of Islamic Mission on the Indian Subcontinent*] by Mas'ûd 'Âlam Nadwî (d. 1954) and, finally, Nadwî's own Arabic works.[35]

The offer of presidentship of the *Râbitat al-adab al-islâmî* to Nadwî by a delegation of Saudi Arab Muslim universities gave him the opportunity to re-establish the Indo-Muslim scholarship of the Nadwat al-'ulamâ' within a transnational frame. Thus, Nadwî attached some conditions to his taking over of the presidency, which were entirely approved by the members of the Arab delegation—the Nadwat al-'ulamâ' should become the institutional core of the League and scene of larger transnational gatherings, and, what is even more typical, leading scholars of the Nadwa, such as its current head, should be entrusted with major positions within the League. With this demand Nadwî aimed at establishing the Indian Nadwat al-'ulamâ' as official branch of a transnational organization; a position which had neither been granted by the Muslim World League nor by the Morocco-based 'World League of Islamic Universities', the Râbitat al-jâmi'ât al-islâmiyya al-'âlamiyya.

[34] In order to understand why Muslim scholars were so concerned with this particular field, one has to bear in mind the special connotation of the Arabic term '*adab*.' Literature was meant to function as representation of exemplary behaviour that draws its inspiration, especially in the case of an Islamic *adab*, from the model behaviour of the Prophet and his companions. Cf. Gabrieli (1986); Metcalf (1984).
[35] Cf. Anonymous (1981).

Being entrusted with the presidentship of the 'World League of Islamic Literature' was of service to Nadwî. He seemed to have used it on the national as well as on the transnational level to strengthen or re-establish his position as *the* leading representative of Indo-Muslim scholarship. At least one conference per year was held on the national level in different locations. In these conventions Nadwî managed to maintain the original claim of the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’ to leadership in the process of standardizing higher religious education in India. The fact that the League helped Nadwî a great deal in overcoming tensions between him and leading representatives of the Ahl-i hadîth might serve as just one example; these tensions arose perhaps primarily from Nadwî's habit of confronting prominent members of the Ahl-i hadîth with the ideology as well as with staunch activists of the Tablîghî Jamâ‘at. Taking into account the fact that this missionary movement emerged from an offshot of Deobandî scholarship, which in turn, had been one of the major theological adversaries of the Ahl-i hadîth right from its start in the mid-19th century, makes the increasing reservations of the Ahl-i hadîth about Nadwî understandable. An article by the current leader of the Ahl-i hadîth in India, Mukhtâr Ahmad Nadwî, written on the occasion of Nadwî's demise, expresses regret for some misunderstandings regarding the Ahl-i hadîth on several occasions, a view that was shared even by renowned *Wahhâbî* scholars of Saudi Arabia.[36] However, the 'World League of Islamic Literature' helped Nadwî quite efficiently in his reconciliation with the Ahl-i hadîth, and, with some rather moderate *Wahhâbî* scholars as well. In 1987 and 1991, for example, he had chosen the Jâmi‘a salafiyya in Benares as the venue for two large symposiums on the life and legacy of the medieval Damascene traditionalist Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), who has, from a very early stage, been an important reference point for the Indian Ahl-i hadîth and the Arabian *Wahhâbiyya* alike. That is why each symposium was also attended by a number of renowned guests from Saudi Arabia.[37]

It seems as if such events did not aim at a revaluation of Nadwî's somewhat battered popularity in the Saudi camp, even though one can concede that this might have been a welcome side effect. Rather, on the national level it appears as if the gatherings of the Râbitat al-adab

[36] Cf. Nadwî (2000: 215).
[37] Cf. Nadwî (1415–1420 AH/1994–1999, III: 322–332); ibid., V: 55f.

al-islâmî were destined to reconcile the different approaches towards Muslim religious education in India, represented by the variety of factions in the Indo-Muslim scholarship. Thus, the League served as a means to keep to the initial aim of the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’: to harmonize the various prevailing and sometimes conflicting approaches in Sunnî Muslim religious education, and to set a standard for their higher religious learning all over India. Such attempts had not only been made in the early phase of the Nadwa in the late 19th century and by means of the Râbitat al-adab al-islâmî from the mid-1980s onwards, but they had always been part of the activities of the Nadwa's leadership. This assumption can be proven by a series of informal talks in the Khânaqâh mujaddidiyya in Bhopal under the aegis of Nadwî which started in 1967 and became of extraordinary importance for the countrywide popularization of the educational concept of the *Dâr al-‘ulûm* of the Nadwa, as well as for the creation of a network of affiliated *madâris* all over India and even beyond.[38]

Another strategy of dissemination of the educational program of the Nadwa in India was, and still is, the integration of some of its renowned graduates into the teaching staff and administration of state-administered universities. A few examples shall illustrate this fact: ‘Abd as-Salâm Qidwâ’î Nadwî (d. 1975), who had been a fellow student of Nadwî in the late 1920s, was head of the 'Department for Religious Studies' at the Jâmi‘a milliyya islâmiyya in Delhi between 1951 and 1972. Shams-i Tabrîz Khân Nadwî, author of the second volume of the official history of the Nadwa, was appointed head of the 'Department of Arabic Language and Literature' of Lucknow University, whereas Muhammad Yâsîn Mazhar Siddîqî Nadwî is currently head of the 'Department of Islamic Studies' at ‘Alîgarh Muslim University.

This strategy of having scholars of the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’ integrated into state-administered colleges and universities was also applied on the transnational level. Using the so-far existing contacts to Middle Eastern countries, Nadwa graduates were appointed to permanent teaching positions at institutions of higher Muslim education in these countries. Thus, ‘Abdallâh ‘Abbâs Nadwî (b. 1926), who holds degrees from the Nadwa as well as from Leeds University in the UK, had taught Arabic Literature at the Nadwa before he moved to and settled in Saudi Arabia some decades ago. He is currently teaching at the Department

[38] Cf. Nadwî (1968); Hasanî (1970); Nadwî (1996); Hartung (2004b: 279f.).

for Arabic Language at the Umm al-qurâ University in Mecca. Another example is Taqî d-Dîn Nadwî Mazâhirî, who was educated at the Nadwa as well as at the Mazâhir al-ʻulûm at Sahâranpûr, and who used to teach the *ʻulûm al-hadîth* at al-ʻAyn University in Abu Dhabi.[39] Both scholars are highly respected by their Arab colleagues and can thus be regarded as mediators between the Arab Muslim scholarship and their *alma mater*, whose head had become more and more marginalized, especially in Saudi Arabia.

On the other hand, and once again quite similar to the national context, Nadwî used the Râbitat al-adab al-islâmî to regain some of his lost reputation in the Arabic-speaking world and, in so doing, to promote further what he perceived as the important contribution of Indo-Muslim scholarship to an universal Muslim culture of religious education. As already touched upon, he sought to counteract his marginalization, especially in the Muslim World League, and his fading reputation among Arab intellectual elites by attempting to integrate renowned personalities from the Arabic-speaking world into the activities of the World League of Islamic Literature.

The choice of Istanbul as the venue for the approximately three-annual general meetings of this body makes it seem probable that Nadwî had consciously looked for a place in the Middle East (in a very wide sense) that was outside the realm of a religious-political hegemonic power, such as Saudi Arabia, in whose opaque games Nadwî got involved by his membership in the Muslim World League and other transnational bodies. Nevertheless, the personalities he attempted to integrate into the activities of the World League of Islamic Literature were also members of different bodies within the Muslim World League. This shows that, apart from Nadwî's attempts at emancipation from the Saudi-dominated bodies expressed in the conscious choice of Istanbul as the venue for the large conventions of the World League of Islamic Literature, he was keen to maintain close contact with other transnational bodies by way of personal relationships behind the scenes. This way, he intensified his long-standing contact with scholars like Yûsuf al-Qaradâwî (b. 1921) and Muhammad Qutb (b. 1919)—the latter being the brother of the well-known Egyptian Islamist thinker Sayyid Qutb (executed 1966)—who both were influential non-Saudi members of the Muslim World League.

[39] Cf. e.g. Nadwî (1415–1420 AH/1994–1999, IV: 41); Nadwî (1420 AH/1999: 0 [sic]).

It was especially the intensified relationship with Yûsuf al-Qaradâwî that proved extraordinarily useful in regaining at least some of the high reputation Nadwî and his companions had once enjoyed among Arab religious scholars and intellectuals. He became a key personality in the attempts to mesh new nets between the Arab and the Indian Muslim religious scholarship, being a member of the Egyptian Muslim Brethren [*al-ikhwân al-muslimûn*] at a very critical stage in their history. Today he is a lecturer at the Faculty for Moral Education at the University of Qatar in Doha, as well as at the Higher Religious Institut of Qatar [*ma'had Qatar ad-dînî ath-thânawî*]. His enormous influence on Muslims all over the world, not least because of his daily program at the Qatar-based satellite TV station *al-Jazîra*, his interactive internet site, and his membership in almost all the important international bodies of *'ulamâ'* predestined him for this task at least since 1980. In this year he visited the Nadwat al-'ulamâ' in Lucknow for the first time, delivering lectures on secular tendencies in the thinking of Muslims and their retort by means of Islamic education.[40] In the following years Qaradâwî developed a strong relationship with Nadwî and began to promote him among the Arab public.[41] At the general meeting of the Râbitat al-adab al-islâmî in August 1996, Qaradâwî paid homage to Nadwî's lifework in a speech, titled 'The Buttresses of Legal Proceedings of the Highly Learned Abû l-Hasan 'Alî Nadwî' [*Rakâ'iz al-fiqh ad-da'wâ 'inda l-'allâma Abî l-Hasan 'Alî an-Nadwî*], which aroused considerable public attention.[42] He even wrote a small biography on Nadwî, highlighting the close relationship of the two scholars as well as eulogizing the Indian scholar for his incessant efforts in the field of Muslim religious education on a global scale.[43]

It can be stated that the alternative strategies to overcome the increasing alienation of the protagonists of the Nadwat al-'ulamâ' from the Arab-dominated transnational Muslim scholarship, especially after the assassination of the Saudi king Faysal b. 'Abd al-'Azîz, seem to have finally worked out well. A look through the periodicals of the Muslim World League gives evidence to the fact that the activities of the Râbitat al-adab al-islâmî were closely watched by the Saudi-

[40] Cf. Anonymous (1980); al-Majdhûb (1983), 477.
[41] Cf. an-Nadwî (1405 AH/1984: 77–83).
[42] Cf. Nadwî (1415–1420 AH/1994–1999, VI: 287f.).
[43] This book is titled *Shaykh Abû l-Hasan an-Nadwî as I Knew Him* [*ash-Shaykh Abû l-Hasan an-Nadwî kamâ 'araftuhu*] and was published in 2001 in Riyadh.

dominated leadership of the Muslim World League.[44] It is too early to say whether or not the election of Nadwî's nephew and successor as head of the Nadwat al-'ulamâ', Sayyid Muhammad Râbi' Nadwî (b. 1929), to the 'Constitutive Assembly' of the League has to be considered an expression of this newly gained global importance of Indo-Muslim religious scholars by the leadership of the transnational bodies.

Conclusion

Muslim scholarship in a certain region, India in our case, cannot be perceived as a closed entity. Mutual exchange of ideas between Muslim religious scholars of different local backgrounds was commonplace, especially if we think of the crucial importance of the *hajj* to Mecca and the role of the Haramayn as meeting ground for Muslim scholars from all over the world. Common political and social conditions at the end of the 19th century, along with the introduction of new means of communication and locomotion moved the Muslim communities closer and created a broader consciousness of similarities in different locations.[45] In this article, we put forward the hypothesis that transnational recognition of local scholarly traditions was sought in order to gain a higher degree of appreciation at the local level. As an example we have outlined the development of the transnational relations of the Nadwat al-'ulamâ', especially with scholarly institutions in the Arabic-speaking world. These relations began with Shiblî Nu'mânî's travels to the Ottoman Middle East in 1892; they were strengthened with the publication of the first Arabic periodical in India that enjoyed wide circulation between 1931 and 1935, and they culminated with the appointment of the then head of the Nadwa, Sayyid Abû l-Hasan 'Alî al-Hasanî Nadwî, as a prominent member of a number of high-end transnational Muslim bodies mainly under the aegis of Saudi Arabia.

The effects of these relations were of two different kinds. The recognition of an Indian scholarly tradition that claimed to represent

[44] A vivid expression of this keen interest of the leadership of the Muslim World League in the activities of the World League of Islamic Literature from a very early stage is the fact that the then vice-president of the Muslim World League and *Wahhâbî* scholar, Muhammad b. Nâsir al-'Abbûdî (b. 1926), was sent as the League's representative to a symposium on Islamic missionary literature, held in October 1991 at the Tâj al-masâjid seminary in Bhopal. Cf. Nadwî (1415–1420 AH/1994–1999, V: 55).

[45] Cf. Hartung (2004a: 83–93).

almost all the prevailing brands of Indo-Muslim reformist scholarship by leading Arab scholars, educationists, and even political functionaries served to the heighten appreciation of the Nadwa as one of the leading educational institutions for Muslims in India. At the same time, the leadership of the Nadwa sought recognition among the Arabs as the Indian outpost of an authoritatively understood global Muslim community united in belief (i.e. the *umma al-wâhida*).

As such, the leading representatives of the Nadwa advocated global Muslim issues, as for example the rise and fall of Nasserism in the Middle East, the Palestine question, or the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan between 1979 and 1989. Furthermore, they attempted to bring Indo-Muslim issues on the transnational agenda. With the example of the difficulties Nadwî faced as a member of the Mecca-based Muslim World League and the Rabat-based World League of Islamic Universities, we have shown that Indian scholars were not always and entirely acknowledged on equal footing by leading Arab scholars and notables, especially in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the World League of Islamic Literature, established in 1984, was designed as a substitute to successfully regain lost reputations among leading Arab scholars, educationists, and political functionaries.

However, to the Indian state authorities this transnational orientation of a leading Muslim religious educational institution, especially with the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, was cause for suspicion. Moreover, in times of internal crises, such as in the mid-1990s when communal tension reached yet another provisional climax, the authorities applied questionable and at the most semi-legal actions against the Nadwa as an institution and against its leading representatives, for the sake of systematic intimidation. In this regard, the accusation of having relations with foreign secret services and in this way harboring anti-state militancy, were now and then publicly used to justify such dubious actions by the state authorities.

Of course, strong and more or less formal links of Indian Muslim educational institutions with their counterparts, especially in the wealthy Gulf region, seems to be always a convenient peg to investigate the features of external funding. Inseparably linked to this is the question of the conditions attached by the donors to their allegedly generous contributions. Indeed, it is difficult to answer this question in a way that could reassure the state authorities and, at the same time, keep open the possibility for Indo-Muslim educational institutions to accept irregular grants from abroad in order to be able to maintain their

important activities. Nadwî's decision to spend the prize money attached to his King Faysal Award for Arabic Literature in 1980 for the maintenance of Muslim religious education, as well as for the material support of the Afghan *mujâhidîn* against the Soviets,[46] was probably not a step designed to dilute the tensions between the Indian state and the more or less autonomous religious institutions. Moreover, the increase of informal donations, especially from the Gulf region, by way of an alternative remittance system [*hawâla*][47] is almost equally unsuited to decreasing the state's suspicion of Muslim religious institutions, especially after 9/11.[48]

How, if at all, can this dilemma be solved? First of all, it needs to be acknowledged that Muslim scholarship—as an integral part of the community of believers in Islam—is essentially transnational. Thus, it will maintain its relationships, especially with what is perceived as the center of the Muslim world, the Hijâz with the cities of Mecca and Medina, and with renowned institutions of higher religious learning in other Muslim countries. It has to be emphatically stressed that this has always been the case and is not a modern phenomenon designed solely to foster anti-state activities as part of a global *jihâd*. It was not least the leadership of the Nadwat al-'ulamâ' that had always emphasized its loyalty to the secular Indian constitution as the best of all possible ways to secure Muslims their right to the unhindered performance of their religious obligations despite their minority status.[49] However, in a globalizing world it appears as but a logical consequence that religious community affairs, such as religious education, are dealt with on a larger geographical scale, at least as long as the religious community

[46] Cf. Nadwî (1415–1420 AH/1994–1999, II: 296).

[47] Although the concept of *hawâla*, as 'the payment of a debt through the transfer of a claim' (Dietrich [1991: 283]), originates from the Arab context; the present practice is more related to the ancient Indian *hundî* system, a remittance system that existed and operated outside of, or parallel to 'traditional' banking or financial channels. What distinguishes *hawâla* from other remittance systems is the extensive use of family relationships or regional affiliations. Unlike 'traditional' banking, *hawâla* makes at the most minimal use of any sort of negotiable instrument. Such transfer of money is based in the first place on communications between members of a decentralized network of *hawâla* dealers [*hawâladâr*s].

[48] We will, however, not neglect to stress that Hindu communalist organizations, such as the VHP and RSS, receive plenty of informal donations from abroad, especially from Indian diaspora communities in the UK and the USA.

[49] Cf. e.g. Nadwî (1415–1420 AH/1994–1999, III: 80–90).

is not spatially confined. On that level, belonging to a particular region is at most of subordinate importance, even though it cannot be ignored that the input from the transnational level has some repercussion on the local/national level.

Therefore we must conclude that only an integrative policy, which is free from stigmatizing entire parts of the Indian people, can be considered a contribution to the solution of the problem. In the area of conflict between an authoritatively grounded orientation to the geographical center of Islam and the countless realities shaped by regionally different needs and demands of the respective Muslim communities, only such a policy can secure the objective that Muslims do not shift their emphasis to the first pole alone. The hard-to-predict consequences of such a shift would be tremendous, because this would open more and more Muslims up to the utopias of a global Islamic polity governed by the *sharî'a* alone and to be realized—if necessary—by force.

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6

Madrasa Education in Bihar

PAUL JACKSON, S.J.

This chapter will focus mainly on the area covered by present-day Bihar, i.e. it will not include the southern portion known today as the state of Jharkhand. Nevertheless, truncated Bihar still has the lion's share of the population, 83,000,000, of whom 13,700,000 are Muslims. Hence our focus is on the *madrasa* education provided to produce religious leadership for these people.

THE PRE-MODERN PERIOD

Bakhtiyâr Khaljî moved into Bihar with his soldiers at the end of the 12th century. He captured Maner, Bihar town and Gaya. By 1202 AD he had taken Nadia, the capital of the Sena kings of Bengal. We know that by the end of the 13th century primary education was being provided in Maner. Shaykh Sharaf ad-Dîn Manerî (d. 1381), the most famous Muslim scholar and Sufi of 14th-century Bihar, writes about his schooling in Maner from about 1295 to 1304: 'I was forced to memorize several books, such as *Masâdir* [*Verbal Nouns*] and *Miftah al-lughât* [*A Key to Words*].[1] Sections of books and even twenty sections of *Miftah al-lughât*, to the measure of one volume, had to be learned by heart. They were checked by having us recite them in full. How I wish they had forced me to learn the Qur'ân by heart instead of those books!'[2] It is clear that young Manerî was studying along with other students under more than one teacher. The place where this instruction was imparted was undoubtedly the local mosque. Gaya was another locality where instruction was provided from the 13th century. Abgila,

[1] I have translated '*lughât*' in accordance with the Persian-English Dictionary by Steingass as 'words' rather than as 'languages', bearing in mind the praxis of memorizing this work by Manerî as a child in the local mosque.
[2] 'Arabî (1884: 43) [translation mine].

now an outer suburb of Gaya, produced scholars down the ages, such as Shaykh ‘Umar, recipient of the first 18 of Manerî's 150 letters written prior to 1368, the year in which the letters were collected into a single volume. This instruction was in addition to the training given to all Muslims, which involved memorizing some short portions of the Qur’ân for use in the obligatory ritual prayer. Manerî is given prominence because of his eminence as a scholar and because he has remained the most revered Sufi of Bihar until the present day.

Manerî himself accompanied a famous scholar, Abû Tawa’ma Bukhârî, who was on his way from Delhi to Sonargaon to teach there at the behest of Sultan Shams ad-Dîn Fîrûz Shâh (d. 1322). This indicates a keen desire to study on the part of the young boy, and also the lack of scope for advanced studies in Maner itself. It is clear from the source material that the Sultan was very keen on promoting studies in Sonargaon and that he gathered a number of very learned men there. As it lies in what is today Bangladesh, however, we will not go into details except to mention that Manerî was a very capable student, with an incredibly retentive memory. A number of his reminiscences, recorded in his *khânaqâh* in Bihar Sharif many years later in the *malfûzât* literature associated with him, indicate that he was accepted and honored as a scholar by the Sultan and the older scholars of Sonargaon. This fact is further highlighted by his teaching in the *maktûbât* [letters] and *malfûzât* [i.e. recorded accounts of what transpired in the assemblies he presided over] which form his literary legacy. Manerî also went to Delhi where he himself reports that he attended lectures of the renowned traditionist and commentator of the Qur’ân, Mawlânâ Diyâ’ ad-Dîn Sunamî of Sunam in the Punjab.[3] Manerî's main purpose in Delhi until his death there in 1332, however, was to tread the Sufi Path under the guidance of Shaykh Najîb ad-Dîn Firdawsî (d. 1291).

By 1337 Manerî was established in a *khânaqâh* on the outskirts of Bihar and this is where he remained until his death in 1381 AD.[4] For the purposes of this paper we shall prescind from the role for which he is most famous, that of a Sufi master who guided and inspired countless people to strive to attain an ever-deeper union with God through worship and service. We shall focus on the more formal studies

[3] Ibid.: 117 [translation mine].

[4] On the relationship between the *madrasa* and the *khânaqâh* regarding pre-modern Muslim religious education, see the chapter of S. Zaheer Husain Jafri in the present volume.

imparted in his *khânaqâh*, such as *hadîth*, *tafsîr al-qur'ân* and *fiqh*. It should not be forgotten, however, that these studies were undertaken in an atmosphere impregnated with Manerî's status as a saintly spiritual guide. Manerî's most brilliant disciple and successor, Muzaffar Shams Balkhî (d. 1400/1401), was even sent back to Delhi to further his studies there, not for the sake of 'rank and position', but 'with sincerity of purpose, doing them for God's sake. Be thorough, so as to be granted fruit in abundance which would be the cause of making progress along the Way.'[5] Manerî's injunction to Muzaffar Shams Balkhî highlights his own attitude towards formal religious studies. They are meant for one's own development and the good of others, not for personal advancement or making money. On the other hand, a good scholar would naturally find scope to utilize his knowledge. It was the right intention that Manerî was insisting on.

A study of the corpus of works from, or about, or connected with Manerî[6] provides ample material about the people engaged in discussions in his *khânaqâh* as well as of the topics discussed and the books referred to. The first *malfûz*, for example, *Ma'din al-ma'ânî* [*A Mine of Mystical Meanings*], is divided into chapters. Various people, mainly disciples ranging from scholars and judges to government officials, ask Manerî all sorts of questions, about God's essence and attributes, for example; and Manerî explains the Mu'tazilite and Ash'arite positions and defends the latter. Many ask for explanations of particular verses of the Qur'ân, while others read out a portion of a book and ask for an explanation. Explanations sometimes evoke follow-up questions and a genuine discussion takes place. Often, however, the explanation proffered is accepted at face value. What we notice in this and other *malfûz* collections is that the people who ask the questions are all senior people, not young students. It seems reasonable to suppose that preliminary teaching was delegated to qualified disciples. No time frame is given or referred to in this work. Discussions arise on various topics and the 'Venerable Master'—as the *malfûzât* collections invariably refer to Manerî—expounds on the particular point that has been raised. It is not possible to say exactly what period of time is covered by *Ma'din al-ma'ânî*, but the material was probably gathered during assemblies held from about 1343 or so until 1348 AD.

[5] Jackson (1987: 89), quoting from *Manâqib al-asfiyâ'* [*Virtues of the Saints*].
[6] Cf. ibid.: 251–253.

Things changed notably in the second *malfûz, Khwân-i pûr ni‘mat* [*A Table Laden with Good Things*].[7] The person responsible for recording both this work and the previous one, Zayn Badr ‘Arabî, says explicitly that it follows *Ma‘din al-ma‘ânî*; gives the exact date on which the recordings began (November 8, 1348) and ended (December 30, 1350). He divides the work according to the assemblies being recorded. This chronological presentation, with variations, is followed in the subsequent *malfûz* collections. While remarking on the fact that many obviously learned men were present in the assemblies and took part in the discussions, it might be more to the point to indicate some of the works studied, leaving aside works on Sufism and Persian poetry, which were quite considerable in number. These studies added a literary and spiritual dimension to the more formal ones.

After citing a Prophetic tradition Manerî says: 'This Tradition is from the collection made by Bukhârî, known as *al-Jâmi‘ as-sahîh*.'[8] He also possessed an excellent copy of the work of the same name by Muslim.[9] He enjoyed reading Muzaffar Shams Balkhî's commentary on *Mashâriq al-anwâr* [*Places of the Rising Lights*] by Hasan b. Muhammad as-Saghânî (d. 1252).[10] This presupposes possession and knowledge of this most commonly studied work of Prophetic traditions during the Sultanate period. The *Hidâya* [*Guidance*] by Shaykh Burhân ad-Dîn ‘Alî (d. 1197), a widely used book on jurisprudence, as well as the lesser-known *usûl*-work by the Mâturîdian ‘Alî b. Muhammad al-Pazdawî (d. 1089) were also studied.[11] *Targhîb as-salât* [*The Desire for Prayer*] and *Jawâhir* [*Gems*], works in the same area of expertise, are mentioned.[12] Manerî had borrowed but returned a copy of the voluminous *Tafsîr al-kabîr* [*The Greater Exegesis*], or *Mafâtih al-ghayb* [*Keys to the Hidden*], of Fakhr ad-Dîn ar-Râzî (d. 1209). His favourite Qur’ânic commentary, however, was the *Tafsîr-i Zâhidî* of Abû Nasr Ahmad ar-Rârûhakî. The interesting thing about this commentary is that it was written in Persian instead of Arabic, the language of all the other commentaries referred to. This might be considered a cultural breakthrough. These works serve as an indication of the fact that

[7] Cf. Jackson (1986: 1).
[8] Jackson (1980: 236).
[9] Cf. Jackson (1987: 127).
[10] Cf. ibid.
[11] Cf. Jackson (1986: 19).
[12] Cf. ibid.: 16.

Manerî had a good collection of books in his *khânaqâh*. He was the last person to be looking for gifts, as he espoused a simple lifestyle and eschewed superfluities, yet a book seems to have been a gift he would not have been easily able to refuse.

The Modern Period

When Raja Ram Mohan Roy (d. 1833), the famous Hindu reformer from Bengal, came to Patna to study Persian and Arabic, he was referred to the scholars in Phulwari Sharif, a settlement 8 kilometers to the west of Patna, dating from prior to 1385, the date on the oldest tomb in the locality. When the English clergyman Henry Martyn (d. 1812) arrived in Danapur, further to the west of Patna, as the first chaplain to the troops of the British East India Company in 1807, he undertook the translation of the New Testament into Urdu, Persian and Arabic in the bungalow in which he was residing within the cantonment area. When some theological difficulties arose, he was advised to contact the scholars in Phulwari Sharif for assistance. It had a well-deserved reputation for excellence in religious studies.

The present-day picture in Bihar is that of a large number of *madâris* but in largely run-down accommodation. Unfortunately this is also true of the *madrasa* associated with the *khânaqâh* in Phulwari Sharif. There are a few *madâris*, however, which give the impression of being well maintained, such as the Jâmi‘a Rahmâniyya, associated with the *khânaqâh* in Munger. Some are quite new, and are simplicity itself, being accommodated in mud buildings, such as the *madrasa* in Sitamarhi. Although it is only about 16 years old, it has an impressively large number of students. A few new *madâris*, such as the one run by the Ahl-i hadîth and named after Ibn Taymiyya in Chandanbara, have extensive buildings constructed with money from abroad. This fact of foreign funding—especially from Saudi Arabia, with its *Wahhâbî* version of Islam, not to mention militant connotations—has led to allegations which will be examined shortly. Some *madâris* cease to function until financial support is once again found. The general impression in Bihar is that financial support is not very strong, though many of the older *madâris* have buildings which were obviously once very impressive structures.

But how many *madâris* are there in Bihar today? One publication, the *Directory of Muslim Educational, Religious and Welfare Associations in India*, brought out by the Institute of Objective Studies, New

Delhi, gives the number as 901 in undivided Bihar.[13] An examination of the contents reveals, for example, that the Dâr al-'ulûm ashrafiyya hâmidiyya, Qila Ghat, Darbhanga (no. 151 on p. 17) is repeated as no. 176 on p. 18 under the name of 'Madarsa [sic] Hamidia'. An excellent study, *Madrasa Education in India* by Kuldip Kaur, says that there were 900 *madâris* under the Bihar Madrasa Education Board in undivided Bihar.[14] It should be noted that this number does not include the large number of privately run *madâris* which receive no aid from the government of Bihar. Another point the author makes is that 'more than 80% of the total madrasas and maktabs [sic] are no better than mere literacy centres.'[15] This generalized figure probably reflects accurately the present situation in Bihar. On the other hand, she points out that, inefficient as many of these may be in their educational input, 'about 75% of Muslims in U.P., Bihar and Bengal are literate because of these maktabs and madrasas.'[16]

Without going into details, some important facts need to be mentioned. The oldest government-aided *madrasa* still functioning in India is the Madrasa-yi 'âliyya in Rampur, dating from 1774. After India became independent it became known as the Oriental College, Rampur. The privately-funded Farangî Mahall in Lucknow was begun in 1693, but it ceased to function and was found to be closed in 1985.[17] The oldest government-aided *madrasa* in Bihar is the Madrasa-yi îslâmiyya Shams al-Hudâ, Patna, founded in 1912. Hence this particular form of educational institution is a comparatively recent phenomenon in Bihar. There were a few institutions in the Sultanate period, however, such as the one in Hauz Khas [*hawd khâss*], Delhi, built and maintained by Fîrûz Shâh Tughluq (d. 1388). An examination of the history of various individual *madâris* and of the Bihar Madrasa Examination Board reveals a pattern of efforts being continuously made to improve the quality of education being imparted. Another very significant fact to note is the effect of the switch from Persian to English as the official language of administration by the British East India Company in 1837. This was accompanied by the opening of schools and colleges where

[13] Cf. IOS (1995: 11–46).
[14] Cf. Kaur (1990: 225).
[15] Ibid.: 281.
[16] Ibid.: 254.
[17] Cf. ibid.: 52. This is outlined in greater detail in the chapter by Syed Najmul Raza Rizvi in the present volume.

English was the medium of instruction. These were looked upon with suspicion by the Muslims and considered to be indirect attempts to subvert the Islamic way of life of Muslims and to promote conversions to Christianity. On the other hand, Persian, Arabic, Urdu and theology [*kalâm*] were introduced in and after 1857 in various universities.[18] They were largely shunned by Muslims and this was the time when many *madâris* were founded, such as the most famous one of all, *Dâr al-'ulûm* at Deoband, in 1866/1867. While Muslims shied away from English, Hindus made the most of the opportunities provided and eventually succeeded in securing the lion's share of government jobs, which was a complete reversal of the situation that had prevailed as long as Persian remained the official language. The one outstanding exception to this trend was Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khân (d. 1898) who clearly saw the need for an English education, albeit in an Islamic outfit, in order to face up to the modern world. 'Alîgarh Muslim University is a tangible reminder of his strenuous efforts to provide an institution 'where Muslims could acquire an English education without prejudice to their religion.'[19]

Any attempt to make progress in the *madâris* in present-day Bihar has to take account of the ground reality of financial restrictions. The *madâris* which come under the Bihar Madrasa Examination Board are aided by the Government of Bihar, as are other minority-run institutions, such as many run by Christians. They receive payment as grant-in-aid for a fixed number of posts. The situation experienced by all these schools is that the money comes normally between one and two years after it is due, and it never happens that the full amount is given. Usually a backlog of at least six months remains, even immediately after funds have been released. Better-off Muslim institutions have funds to advance payment, usually on a percentage basis, for up to six months, but then they dry up. The majority of institutions have no money to provide this aid, so teachers are, on the average, about a year and a half behind in receiving part of their salaries. What can be expected from teachers in this predicament? Moreover, money for maintenance of the buildings, or for equipping laboratories, or for sports equipment is almost non-existent.

When it comes to privately run, unaided institutions, the pay scale is quite low. These *madâris* normally depend almost totally on public

[18] Cf. ibid.: 124.
[19] Ibid.: 188.

subscription, for they provide free education to their students. In a number of places managing committees of prominent local Muslim businessmen take their obligations seriously and do a commendable job in supplying and raising funds to maintain the *madrasa*. Unfortunately, such *madâris* are clearly in the minority. The majority experience a precarious existence.

It should also be pointed out that Government-aided schools provide a combination of Islamic subjects, such as *fiqh* and *tafsîr al-qur'ân*, and secular ones, such as natural science,[20] modern mathematics and English. Because of the paucity and incredible irregularity of funds, laboratories are almost non-existent or devoid of equipment. A similar difficulty arises in connection with finding competent English teachers. The result is that the syllabus in these subjects is equivalent to that in normal schools, but the teaching is, generally speaking, woefully inadequate. Successful candidates, however, do receive Government-recognized certificates. According to Habîb ar-Rabb, the Deputy Director of the Bihar Madrasa Board, there are 194 such *madâris* in Bihar, in addition to 925 middle schools.

If we turn our attention to the private *madâris*, the standard of teaching in the secular subjects mentioned above can be left to the imagination as far as most of them are concerned. It seems opportune to mention once again that the crux of the problem is poverty. Some privately-funded *madâris* are well-equipped and have good teachers, such as the above-mentioned Rahmâniyya in Munger, while a larger number of them have active and dedicated local committees who ensure that a certain standard is maintained in the *madrasa*. For the majority of *madâris*, however, the committees are struggling to find funds to keep the *madâris* functioning. Education is free, and the majority of students stay in the hostels run by the *madâris*. Funds have to be found to pay the teachers, to provide meals for the students, maintain the buildings, pay for electricity and water and so on. However, the resources available are limited because most of Bihar's 14,000,000 Muslims are economically weak. I have often been in a *madrasa* when the postman has brought in the money orders of donations for the *madrasa*. Sums of 20, 30, or 50 rupees are common, not large amounts. Some *madâris* cannot manage and have to shut down. As the survey in border districts clearly shows, Muslims are happy

[20] One attempt to improve the teaching of science is outlined in the chapter by S. Abul Hashim Rizvi in this volume.

that their children are at least getting an education, and that without cost, and the students themselves insist on their devotion to India.

In this overall situation the whole question of utilizing computers in the education of the students—leaving aside the whole question of competent instructors, as well as the misgivings of older teachers who fear an undermining of their authority once computers are introduced—becomes a pipe dream. A few *madâris* have a computer in the office, but they seem to be utilized more by a handful of people for their own purposes rather than to actually facilitate the running of the office, much less to serve as a tool to instruct the students. On top of this one has to mention the woeful electricity supply. It is not possible to run computers in most parts of Bihar simply by relying on the public electricity supply. People are forced into buying generators and other equipment if they wish to ensure a reliable supply of electricity. All of this involves much expenditure. This is clearly beyond the means of cash-strapped *madâris*.

A Grassroots Survey

In the wake of a spate of allegations that *madâris*, especially in the border areas, were centers for training terrorists, the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, carried out a survey between June and October 2003, titled *Muslim Institutions in the Indo-Nepal Border Districts*. It was conducted, under the guidance of Dr Muhammad Mukhtâr ‘Alam, by three investigators, according to the methodology employed in the pilot project that Dr ‘Alam had himself undertaken. The districts covered in Bihar were Kishanganj, Araria, Sepaul, Madhubani, Sitamarhi, West Champaran and East Champaran. A questionnaire was drawn up in Hindi. The method was to examine thoroughly five *madâris* in each district, urban as well as rural, by interviewing teachers, students, parents of the students and local people. Five other *madâris* were then chosen where only the teachers were interviewed. In each district the District Magistrate, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Superintendent of Police, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Sub-Inspectors, Block Development Officers, teachers from Government schools and village *chawkîdâr*s were also interviewed.

The data collected is still being checked and correlated. According to Dr ‘Alam, in a personal interview conducted on December 3, 2003, in the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, it will be some time before the completed report is published, but the thrust of what the people

interviewed have said is quite interesting. What they are pointing out is that the *madâris* give a secular ideology, stressing that there should be no fighting and that everyone should try to live in peace and security. They also say that the *madâris* had played an important role in the struggle to obtain independence from Great Britain and made sacrifices for the country. They also stressed the yeoman work done in the *madâris* to spread literacy to larger sections of the society. They maintain that no communal riot ever began in a *madrasa*. The students themselves say that they learn about their religion and how to spread the message of peace and to invite people to peace. They also say that those people who are engaged in terrorist activities are the ones who are spreading rumours about *madâris*. They maintain that the *madâris* are for both religious and secular education, and assert very clearly their loyalty to India and their willingness to make sacrifices for the country.

The investigators have commented that both rich and poor students are being educated in the *madâris*. They are receiving both a religious and a secular education. They are being taught how to proceed along the path of being good Muslims and good citizens of India at the same time. *Madrasa* teachers themselves say that a lot of money is spent on government schools where little teaching is done, and even the teaching imparted is not done in any effective manner. They went on to add that if a fraction of the money spent on government teachers were spent on them, then everybody would become literate! Parents of the children in the *madâris* point out that they do a great service for the children of poor Muslims who cannot afford to pay for an education for their children. Most of the *madâris* are run on donations collected from the local people. They give money because they are convinced that a good job is being done in the *madâris*. There were no reports of misuse of funds. The general impression is that the funds are just adequate to enable the *madâris* to keep functioning. Another very interesting point is that none of the government or police officials interviewed, or anyone else for that matter, knew of any kind of militant training or ideology being imparted in any *madrasa*.

It is worth mentioning that the generalized allegations about the imparting of 'terrorist ideology and training' was focused on the districts bordering Nepal. Moreover the emphasis was on the new *madâris* being opened in these areas. Such allegations were not usually made about the vast majority of older, well-known *madâris*. Thus it is not suprising to find that very specific allegations were made about a new

madrasa not far from the border of Nepal. It was singled out because it has a large campus with impressive new buildings, and is funded to a large extent from Saudi Arabia. This *madrasa* will now be examined.

Case Study I: The Chandanbara *Madrasa*

All sorts of reports began to circulate in newspapers in early 2002 about the Jâmi‘a Ibn Taymiyya in Chandanbara, East Champaran District, Bihar. The reports cited Intelligence Bureau as claiming that henchmen of the notorious gangster from Mumbai, now based overseas, Dawood Ibrahim [Da’ûd Ibrâhîm], were secretly frequenting the *madrasa*. It was also claimed that, in addition to the impressive complex of buildings covering some 70 acres, there was also a network of underground buildings. Moreover portions of the complex were claimed to be strictly out of bounds to the general public. Foreign weapons were claimed to be stored there, waiting to be used as required by terrorists.

A team of concerned citizens of Patna, led by Dr Râzî Ahmad, Secretary, Gandhi Sangrahalaya in Patna, and comprising Dr B.D. Prasâd, Prof Îshwarî Prasâd, Shrî Braj Kishore Sinhâ, Satya Narâyan Madan and Arshad Ajmal set out to find out the facts for themselves. I am quoting from their report, in Hindi, presented to me by Dr Râzî Ahmad during an interview carried out at the Patna Gandhi Sangrahalaya on January 15, 2004. The report also contains photographs of some of the buildings. One picture showed a most impressive three-storey building with the caption Staff Quarters [*karamchârî awâs*].

The team arrived unannounced about 1 pm on March 19, 2002. They discussed finances and other matters with the Registrar, Treasurer, Hostel Superintendent and Teachers' Representative. They also engaged in casual conversation with other teachers and students. They had an unrestricted tour of the entire campus and departed after 4 pm.

They discovered that the *madrasa* was registered with the Bihar government. Moreover it was registered with the Home Ministry with an FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) number: 0131280016/2.9.98. This means that the full audited accounts of money received and spent have to be submitted to the Home Ministry every year. The man behind the whole program is Dr Muhammad Luqmân Salafî. He is from Chandanbara itself but has been living in Saudi Arabia for over thirty years, where he has been a *muftî* in the Religious Legal Opinion Department of the kingdom [*Dâr al-iftâ’ wa-l-ishrâf ‘alâ sh-shu’ûn*

ad-dîniyya]. He wanted to help the people of Chandanbara and used his influence to obtain funds for this purpose. Roughly speaking, the campus covers 10 acres while another 10 acres are cultivated. There is a whole separate section for some 625 girls, of whom 495 stay in the hostel, with their own classrooms, hostel accommodation, mosque, kitchen and dining room. Similar arrangements have been made for the 700 or so boys studying in the *madrasa*, of whom 558 are in the hostel. There are 41 male and 9 female teachers. There are also staff quarters, administrative space, a library and a hospital. Work has also commenced on a technical section. While the teaching is free, a hostel fee of Rs 450 per month is charged in order to meet the mess expenses for those living in the hostel. While it is true that Islamic subjects are taught in all the classes, it is similarly true that subjects like English, mathematics and science are taught too. Moreover, there is also a computerized Islamic Studies Centre on the campus. It is engaged in translation and publishing work.

The funds for this complex come from three main sources. The first is from religious sources such as *zakât*, hides of sacrificed animals, etc. The second source is public contribution, while the third is from abroad. They also get about 600 *maunds* of wheat and 1,000 *maunds* of paddy each year. During Ramadân, when the *madrasa* is closed for annual holidays, people go to the larger cities asking for donations from rich Muslims. The foreign assistance comes from Saudi Arabia due to the fund-raising efforts of Dr Salafî, a fact that aroused the suspicion of the Indian authorities. There was, however, absolutely no sign of militant training or weapons. The only underground construction they saw was a basement beneath the main mosque. It was half beneath the ground and half above. The suggestion for a basement had come from the architect and not from the school's officials. They saw wood and cement stored there.

The team concluded that there was no foundation in reality for the charges that had been levelled against the *madrasa* in Chandanbara. While it is true that funds come from Saudi Arabia and that the religious teaching being imparted is to the liking of the donors, the fact remains that the core issue behind the allegations was the communal agenda of the ruling party of the time. This particular *madrasa* was singled out for 'treatment' because of its conspicuous visibility, both in terms of buildings and efficiency.

Case Study II: A Contemporary Experiment

There is another independent source which serves to confirm the results of the survey and of the visit to Chandanbara. Since 1983 an interesting experiment, designed to enable students of Christian Theology, mainly belonging to the Jesuit Order, to have first-hand experience of Muslims, has been conducted in Bihar. Candidates have to have an Intermediate pass before joining the Order, as well as a preparatory period of one year with an emphasis on improving their Hindi and English. Then they have a two-year period of novitiate, followed by another year of literary studies; a course of philosophy, followed by graduate studies, and a period of practical training as teachers or social workers. Many also obtain a master's degree during this period. Then they begin a four-year course in Theology. The first two years are conducted in a regional theologate near Patna. After that they complete the rest of their course in Delhi. They are all computer literate.

During their period of Theology they have courses on Christian Theology, but they also have courses and exposure programs to the realities of contemporary Bihar and an analysis of the factors involved. They experience lived Hinduism in Varanasi, while a similar program, directed to an experience of lived Islam, is conducted in Bihar. Since 1983 the person organizing this program—myself—has been visiting various towns in Bihar, as well as in Patna itself, contacting *madâris*, and preparing the way for students, two by two, to visit them and ask questions about Islam. In addition to engaging in dialogue with the principals, teachers and students in the *madâris*, arrangements are also made for them to visit some Sufi shrines and *Shâh Sâhib*s [i.e. descendants of the Sufis], make contact with middle-class Muslims, and also meet economically weak Muslims in order to get a broad spectrum of views and attitudes from these four different groups of Muslims.

Over the last twenty years they have gone to *madâris* in Munger, Bhagalpur, Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi, Ara, Bihar Sharif, Gaya, Phulwari Sharif and Patna itself, all of which were previously visited by me. When they return they share their experiences. What strikes them is the commitment of the people to their Islamic faith, as well as the variety of views that they encounter once a discussion gets going. It is quite common for them to have discussions for two or three hours at a stretch. By sharing their own experience, as well as listening to that of others, they get a very good idea of Islam as it is actually lived in Bihar.

Our focus, however, is on the *madrasa* aspect of the experience and much less on the *khânaqâh* or *Shâh Sâhib* experience. The first thing that strikes the Jesuit students of theology is the simplicity of the buildings and lifestyle of the teachers and students, as well as the commitment of the students to their studies. The second thing that strikes them is the syllabus and method of teaching. Encountering young boys who are busily engaged in learning the Qur'ân by heart, when they can read but not understand Arabic, is a great surprise for them. This also typifies the method used, involving a heavy reliance on memory, and texts which might be centuries old. For example, the final year could be entirely devoted to the study of the *Jâmi' as-sahîh*, the collection of sound *ahâdîth* by al-Bukhârî who died in 870 AD. This highlights both the importance of the study of *hadîth* as well as the pre-eminence of Bukhârî's collection of *hadîth*. The next thing they notice is the almost exclusive focus on the religion of Islam during the whole course, meaning that no comparative perspective at all is provided. It is true that the Government-aided *madâris* have some other subjects, such as English and mathematics, but no student in the past twenty years has reported conversing in English in any *madrasa*. There is also a 'Federation of *madâris* in Bihar' which has its headquarters in the Imârat-i sharî'a, Phulwari Sharif. This federation consists of 185 *madâris* situated in undivided Bihar. The examinations in the upper classes are all organized from the central office. Subjects like English, natural science and modern mathematics are included in the examinations, but one wonders at the standard of these subjects. For example, it is extremely doubtful that English is taught effectually in these *madâris*. Essentially the *madrasa* system is a handing on of the religious tradition of Islam.

This is where the great contrast is seen with the Jesuit students. They are encouraged to raise questions and form opinions in the context of the situation of religious pluralism which prevails in India. They try to theologize, not simply hand on the *textus receptus*, so to speak. Their fundamental text remains the Bible, particularly the Gospel narratives, but the writings of the Church Fathers; the decrees of Oecumenical Councils (especially those of Vatican II) and the Encyclical Letters of recent Popes; the writings of modern theologians and scripture scholars; the input of the social sciences and psychology; the experience of people of other faiths, particularly Hindus and Muslims; as well as studies on ecological issues, are all utilized in order to try to understand the present-day reality in which we live. The aim is

to be able to respond, as Christian leaders, to people's perceived needs. The foundation of this response remains Christian faith, but it intrinsically involves dialogue with members of other religious traditions as a process of spiritual discernment and enrichment. The contrast between the Christian students and their Muslim counterparts is obvious. It is clear that this experiment has been most beneficial for the Christian students, enabling them to form judgements on Islam as it is lived in Bihar which are based on cumulative personal experience, as opposed to relying on the media's highlighting of terrorist attacks by people who mostly—in Kashmir, for example—kill innocent fellow-Muslims. The crucial question in the present context, however, is to ascertain the impact of these ongoing exchanges on the *madâris* where they take place. The answer is not known, as the question itself has not been raised. It should also be pointed out that no one has reported having come across any form of militant training or anti-national activities in any of the *madâris*. Thus, the experience of the Jesuit students confirms the findings of both the grass-root survey by the Indian Social Institute and by the civil rights activists of Patna.

Some reflections about the impact of their visits, however, seem to be in order. Firstly, the fact that the Christian students—for that is how they are perceived—have come to find out for themselves about Islam as taught in the *madâris* creates a good impression. As the students have been instructed to ask questions and discuss, but not to get involved in any arguments, their behaviour, as well as the enlightened yet probing nature of their questions, provides the staff and students with opportunities to reflect on points they may have taken for granted, or not even thought of. The Christian students do not come as outsiders who are trying to reform the *madâris*, but their very presence, background and attitudes provide scope for quiet reflection. Another most important point is the unfailing hospitality with which the visiting students are received in the *madâris*. They come away with a deep conviction that Muslims are extremely hospitable people. This growth in interpersonal relationships produces positive results which defy quantification.

The overall difference in approach is quite clear. A few comments by one of the Christian participants in this program in February 2003 might prove enlightening.[21]

[21] Cf. Jeerakassery (2003: 170–175).

> A teacher from the Islamic religious school talked his mind out: 'You Christians haven't understood who Christ was. You call him the Son of God, while he himself declared that he is only a servant of Allah. Can God have a son? Equating ‘Îsa with God is the most abominable crime that you Christians have committed. But we Muslims believe in ‘Îsa and his words. We revere him as a prophet and messenger of Allah.' My mind whispered, 'Be careful, you are facing a hardcore Muslim.' However, later when I reflected over the outburst of that teacher, my mind refused to term him as a 'hardcore' Muslim. For I realized he was only expressing his world-view, which was part and parcel of his upbringing. His reaction was merely a verbal expression of the clash between two world views, theological languages and understandings.[22]

These words of the Jesuit student tell their own story. On the other hand, a middle class Muslim had this to say to two of the students: 'A person belonging to a particular religion has a gift bestowed upon that individual by the Creator. If this is so, then every religion must be good.'[23]

The main reason for speaking about this experiment is that neither I nor any students have ever come across any trace of any form of terrorist activity, as I have already pointed out. The second point of the contrast is to emphasize the mutual benefits gained by all as a result of the sharing involved. It may be pointed out that the area under study is Bihar, not the whole of India, and much less the whole world. The Jesuit House of Studies is the only Catholic theologate in Bihar. This should not come as a surprise when one realizes that the 2001 census gave the total Christian population of Bihar as 53,137 out of 83,000,000 people. In this context the theological exchange, though clearly limited, is not devoid of significance, certainly not for the Christian students involved, and probably not for the Muslims either. It is part of the *madrasa* scene in Bihar.

Conclusion

It is important to understand the deep-rooted affection for their religion that animates the staff and students in the *madâris*, as well as the

[22] Ibid.: 174.
[23] Ibid.: 173.

practical dimensions of the seeking of affordable education, which, it is hoped, will provide scope for a livelihood in the years to come. This has to be seen in the context of life in Bihar as a whole. In many rural areas roads are either non-existent or practically impassable. Electricity is a luxury experienced for a few hours a day in towns and not at all in most villages. The government primary and secondary education system is, in many instances, simply non-functioning. Some schools exist on paper only, while teachers in others come once a month to fill the attendance register and collect their monthly salary. Village health care is almost non-existent. It is against this background that the *madâris* of Bihar have to be seen. Moreover the 2001 census gives the literacy rate of Muslims in Bihar as 42 per cent compared to 48 per cent for Hindus, while the telling figure of work participation rate, 31 per cent by Muslims compared to 34 per cent by Hindus, serves to drive home the fact of widespread poverty in Bihar, among both Hindus and Muslims. Having said this, it is obvious that there is a very real and urgent need to take seriously the present-day reality of life in Bihar, including its dimension of religious plurality. It has been remarked that there have been many instances of changes in the curriculum of many *madâris* as documented by Kaur. This means that scope for modifications in the curriculum exists and changes are effected when the need to bring them about is felt. It has to be realized, however, that the challenges involved, both financial and otherwise, are quite daunting in the present reality of Bihar.

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7

Understanding Deoband Locally: Interrogating Madrasat Diyā' al-‘Ulūm[1]

ARSHAD ALAM

9/11 has been one of the most significant events in recent history. It has been the singular event that has brought the contradiction between the 'Muslim world' and what is popularly called the 'West' to the forefront. While 'Western' interest in Islam has a long pedigree, going back a few centuries, the post-9/11 world saw the renewal of this interest with an unprecedented vigour. It is perhaps against this backdrop that Islamic education has become the focus of scholarly and public debate once again, with much ferocity, not only in the 'West,' but also in India, a Muslim minority country. The contours of this 'Indian debate' cannot however, be divorced from the domestic political climate, which saw the Hindu right-wing BJP capturing political power. As part of their wider politics of establishing the Muslim as the 'Other', the BJP regime in India targeted the *madâris* as institutions which produced 'Islamic terrorists'. Although it failed to establish any such connection, one of the consequences of such targeting was that *madâris* were pulled out of relative obscurity, drawn into the public arena and debated upon like any other social institution within Indian society. This de-sacralization of a hitherto sacred institution will hopefully generate much-needed knowledge about *madâris* and their functioning in India.

Scholarship on Islamic education in India has largely focussed on the colonial period,[2] which has contributed to a relative paucity of

[1] I take this opportunity to thank Hâfiz Muhammad Shahîr ad-Dîn Sâhib, and ‘Abdallâh Sâhib of the Madrasat diyâ’ al-‘ulûm for their precious time and their kind permission to stay within the precincts of the *madrasa*. Without their permission and the cooperation of the teachers, this paper would not have been possible. I would also like to thank the students who were generous enough to share their time and accommodation with me. I would finally like to thank Prof. Jamal Malik and Dr Jan-Peter Hartung for their comments on an earlier draft of the paper.

works on the ways in which *madâris* have organized themselves and contributed to the production of knowledge in the contemporary period.[3] It is only recently that scholars, activists and policy makers have turned their attention towards the *madrasa* [pl.: *madâris*] system in India. Although begun for doubtful reasons (the post-9/11 American Right scramble to find terrorists, which was more than enthusiastically supported by its cohorts in India, the Hindu right-wing BJP government) it has been a blessing in disguise as alluded to above. However, the very agenda of this scrutiny of *madâris* has meant that the 'object' of study has been within set parameters, which in this case has been Islamic education and its linkages with terrorism. Thus even a cursory review of scholarly as well as popular writings in India makes it clear that the greater part of the debate on *madrasa* education post-9/11 has been an exercise in establishing a correspondence between *madrasa* education and militant Islam or a passionate denial of any such affinity.[4] Analyzes of contemporary *madâris* within the local setting, and in particular their relationship with issues of caste, class and power, has remained marginal. The present chapter, in trying to understand these linkages within the local setting of a north Indian district, is in this sense a marginal one. In seeking to understand the workings of a local Deobandi *madrasa*, the chapter attempts to participate in the Indian debate on *madrasa* education, although not on the agenda set by the post-9/11 academic world.

A Note about the *Dār al-'Ulūm* in Deoband

The current association of fundamentalist Islam with the Deoband school has much to do with the fact that the Afghan Tâlibân has been the product of Deoband school of thought. It must be noted here that

[2] For the colonial period, cf. Metcalf (1982: 87–137), which analyzes the *madrasa* at Deoband until 1900; Sanyal (1996), which is more about the movement of Ahmad Ridâ Khân than its institutional location, but cf. pp. 72–82; Malik (1996: 15–32); Robinson (2002: 177–210).

[3] I use the word 'contemporary' to refer to developments after 1947. Among the few works on the contemporary period, cf. especially the impressive survey of Kaur (1990); Qamr ad-Dîn (1997); Ansari (1997); Saiyed and Talib (1985).

[4] *Economic and Political Weekly* [EPW] is considered the benchmark journal for scholarly debates in India. This is clearly reflected in articles on themes relating to *madrasa* education in the country after 9/11. Cf. also the articles in magazines like the *Milli Gazette*.

it was the American corporate greed for gas pipelines as well as its dislike of the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan which helped to create and sustain the Tâlibân. The Deobandî mercenary *madâris* created on the Afghan-Pakistan border were very different from those educational institutions for which Deoband is known in other parts of the subcontinent.[5] Particularly in India, Deoband has been associated with the national movement, creating and sustaining a network of its affiliates across the country, and its contribution towards Muslim religious education, *hadîth*-studies in particular. Since the *madrasa* under study here, Diyâ' al-'ulûm in Bodh Gaya in the north Indian state of Bihar, is associated with the Deoband school of thought, it becomes imperative to recount some of the salient features of the *madrasa* as it evolved in the middle of 19th century.[6]

Founded in 1864, the Deoband *madrasa* participated in the world-wide Islamic revival during the 19th century. Following the tradition of Shâh Walî Allâh of Delhi (d. 1762), of resolving internal differences within the *umma* and the reintroduction of the systematic study of *hadîth*, Deoband produced *'ulamâ'* who sought to become leaders of the 'inner caliphate' [*bâtinî khilâfa*]. In its understanding of religious education as the basis for reconstruction of Muslim society, the founders of Deoband, Muhammad Qâsim Nanawtawî (d. 1877) and Rashîd Ahmad Gangohî (d. 1905), were deeply influenced by the itinerant Islamic thinker Shâh Walî Allâh Dihlawî. He had hoped for a restoration of stable Muslim rule in which the *'ulamâ'* would play an important role through the institution of the *Shaykh al-islâm* [an honorific title bestowed by the political ruler to the leader of the *'ulamâ'*] and his lieutenants who would be responsible for bidding what is right and forbidding what is wrong.[7] Analyzing the basis of the

[5] Cf. Metcalf (2002: 19).
[6] Indeed Deoband is not just a name of a *madrasa*, but in the sense it is used here it has also been a movement, the nucleus of which has been the *Dâr al-'ulûm* at Deoband. It must be noted however, that the word is used pejoratively by the detractors of the movement, particularly the Ahl-i sunnat wa jamâ'at, who are known as 'Barelwîs'. The politics of naming seeks to rob Deoband of its claim to represent true Islam, fixing it within a given locality, thus denying a trans-geographical legitimacy. However, the name has become so popular that even Deobandîs themselves do not hesitate to call themselves by this name. For the initial years and the conditions under which the *madrasa* arose, cf. Metcalf (1982: 47–86). For its rival denomination, the Barelwîs, cf. Sanyal (1996: 15–48).
[7] Cf. Ghazi (2002: 142).

arrangement between ruler and *'ulamâ'*, he argued the necessity of their complementary functions and the need for proper balance between the two. He enunciated the pervasive ideal of enlightened Muslim leadership guided by responsible *'ulamâ'*. In that ideal the 'outer caliphate' [*zâhirî khilâfa*] would be responsible for securing order and stability, whereas the 'inner caliphate' of the religious leadership would guide the ruler and instruct the community.[8] Even in a flawed political order, such as that under the colonial context, Shâh Walî Allâh sought an important role for the religious leadership: that of advising the rulers, guiding the community and safeguarding the intellectual heritage.

Apart from vesting the *'ulamâ'* with a conscious role as custodians of the community, one of the founders of Deoband, Muhammad Qâsim Nanawtawî, enunciated some eight guiding principles, which later became something akin to their constitution.[9] The sixth principle warned the future custodians of the *madrasa* against the surety of a fixed income. It stated that as long as there was no permanent source of income for the *madrasa*, it would be able to fulfill the purpose for which it was founded. It sought the reason for the demise of earlier *madâris* like the Farangî Mahall, established in 18th century Lucknow, in their dependence on land revenue [*jâgîr*] or other grants for means of livelihood [*madad-i ma'âsh*]. In place of depending on the increasingly dwindling resources of landlords [*zamîndâr*] and estate owners [*jâgîrdâr*], Deoband sought to create a clientele composed of ordinary lay Muslims who would fund this *madrasa* as well as be its social base.[10] This point is important, as it was perhaps for the first time that lower-class and -caste Muslims were accessing *madrasa* education on this scale. While the pre-colonial *madâris* had exclusively catered to upper-class and high-caste Muslims (and Hindus), colonial Deoband was successful in taking its own understanding of Islam to the doorsteps of lower-class and -caste Muslims. As there must have been a reason why it was being done, we must turn to another very important objective of the Deoband *madrasa*, in a sense its *raison d'être*.

The 19th century was a period of profound social changes for Indian Muslims. The upper-caste and primarily service class Muslims were seeking new articulations through the 'Alîgarh-movement of Sir Sayyid

[8] Cf. Metcalf (1982: 36).
[9] Cf. Rizvi (1980: 116f.).
[10] Compare Metcalf (1982: 97).

Ahmad Khân (d. 1898). English education was fast becoming the *rites de passage* for these classes of Muslim society, who were getting integrated into the colonial sector. On the other hand, this period also saw increasing restlessness among the lower-caste Muslims, particularly the artisan sections, who were the primary sufferers of what is called the deindustrialization of India. The lower-caste and -class Muslims in this period were increasingly assertive in appropriating religious spaces which hitherto had not been theirs. On the other hand it might well be argued that the upper-class and high-caste Muslims' increasing acceptance of English education as a means of social and cultural mobility opened up spaces within the religious sector for these lower sections of Muslims. It is not a coincidence that the Bengal peasants and artisans were active in the *Farâ'idiyya* movement of Hâjjî Sharî'atallâh (d. 1840) and later his son Muhammad Muhsin 'Dûdû Miyân' (d. 1860). The 'less-exalted' professional classes such as weavers and tailors were similarly active in what came to be known as the 'Wahhâbî'[11] movement in India, led by Sayyid Ahmad Barelwî (killed 1831) and his disciple Shâh Ismâ'îl Dihlawî (killed 1831).[12] What seems to have been happening in 19th-century Indian Muslim history is an unprecedented 'pressure from below', on part of the lower-caste Muslims to shed their low [*radhîl*] status and claim equality with the *ashrâf* [lit.: the noble] in the religious domain.[13] For the *ajlâf* [lit.: the raw, the crude], it meant an appropriation of social honour as well as a satisfaction of belonging to a corporate Muslim identity. Movements such

[11] Not to be confused with 'Wahhâbism' which emerged through the writings of Arab Muslim reformer Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhâb (d. 1792) whose *Kitâb at-tawhîd* [*The Book of the Belief in and the Affirmation of God's Oneness*] laid the foundations of the worldwide movement of purist Islam pejoratively known as the *Wahhâbiyya*. In fact the term 'Wahhâbî' in the Indian context seems to be more of a British projection; cf. Hermansen (2000: 30–34); Malik (2000: 11f.); for the lower-caste social base of this movement in India, cf. Ahmad (1985: 61).

[12] Sayyid Ahmad Barelwî and Shâh Ismâ'îl Dihlawî launched the so-called 'Mujâhidîn' movement against the British. Alongside this conflict they wrote religious tracts, which were to be become popular in the sub-continent. The most important religious tract written by Shâh Ismâ'îl Dihlawî seems to be *Taqwiyyat al-îmân* [*The Strengthening of Belief*], which was extremely critical of the contemporary Muslim practice of shrine worship. The book lays down clearly what according to him constituted correct Islamic practice and what constituted 'associationism' (or 'polytheism') [*shirk*] and *bid'a*. Cf. Shaheed (1995: 52–53, 80–86).

[13] For the specific case of weavers/*Ansârî*s, cf. Pandey (1984: 264).

as the 'Mujâhidîn' and, later, Deoband seem to have accommodated such aspirations of the lower classes of Muslims, since apart from providing them with a social base, such a relationship also provided an opportunity to 'reform' the ordinary lay Muslims; to teach them to differentiate between 'correct' Islamic practice and what was called reprehensible innovation or *bid'a*.

Bid'a was defined as almost any new element that had cropped up in Islamic practise after the development of Islamic jurisprudence during the 8th and 10th centuries AD. Deoband came down heavily upon shrine-based Muslim worship, which it categorized as *bid'a* and which was the popular Muslim practice in India. It was these practices which according to Deoband were the cause of the downfall of Muslim power in India. And in the specific situation of India, it were the lowly *ajlâf* which were by and large the repositories of such un-Islamic practices due to the fact that they were unaware of the true Islamic teachings. It had become very important therefore to teach the 'correct' religion [*dîn*] to the lower-class Muslims of India, for they were 'too Hindu' to be called Muslims. *Madâris* were considered as the best way to reach out to these classes as well as to have an organic linkage with them; a linkage which would make the *madâris* an inextricable part of Muslim society. We see therefore that the edifice of Deoband is built on two interrelated structures: the first was (and still is) its desire to rinse the Indian Muslims of all 'fuzzy' identities so as to clearly categorize them; and secondly, doing so would necessitate working with the lower-caste and -class Muslims, and eventually becoming indelibly woven into the fabric of that society for the exercise of their own hegemony. Now let us understand the workings of these structures through an analysis of one of the many Deobandî *madâris* on the local level; this one on the banks of the river Phalgu, in the district of Gaya, Bihar, North India.

Against *Jāhiliyya*: Establishment of the Madrasat Diyā' al-'Ulūm

Located near the famous Mahâbodhi temple in Bodh Gaya, the Madrasat diyâ' al-'ulûm belongs to the Deoband 'path' [*maslak*]. Founded in 1964 by Mawlânâ Muhammad Shahîr ad-Dîn, it was initially located inside a small mosque at the same spot where it now stands.[14] Not a native

[14] The following account is based on interviews with Muhammad Shahîr ad-Dîn on September 23 and 25, 2002.

of the place and hailing from a family of Deobandî *‘ulamâ’* in the district of Arwal,[15] Mawlânâ Muhammad Shahîr ad-Dîn came to Bodh Gaya after he had a dream in which he was advised to go there for the propagation of the religion [*dîn*]. As the Mawlânâ himself put it, the *hijra* [migration] to Bodh Gaya made his religious calling even more pious, retracing the original *hijra* of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, which marks the beginning of the Islamic era. It must be mentioned here that both—dream and migration—have been used as powerful signs of legitimization throughout Islamic history.[16]

The *madrasa*, which initially started from a corner of an old mosque, had only one student and one teacher. Slowly the *madrasa* gained in strength and presently (in 2002), it has 154 students [*tullâb*/sg.: *tâlib*], ten teachers [*asâtidha*/sg.: *ustâdh*] and six workers [*mulâzimîn*] to look after the affairs of the students, who are mostly boarders. The area of the mosque has also been enlarged so that lectures [*durûs*/sg.: *dars*] are given within that space alone.

It is not very clear why Mawlânâ Shahîr ad-Dîn chose to come to Bodh Gaya from his ancestral place of Arwal. What seems clear, however, is the satisfaction of achieving the purpose for which he started working here. At the time of his arrival, the area where the *madrasa* now stands was a desolate place with only an old dilapidated mosque to signal the Muslim presence in the area. More importantly, the inhabitants were all Barelwîs who did not take kindly to a Deobandî *‘âlim* in their midst. Muhammad Shahîr ad-Dîn initially had to face many hardships including physical injury, but through his patient work he seems to have won over the Muslims of the area. Also, the very fact that he was the only *‘âlim* in the area made him indispensable for the religious services which only he could provide.[17] Firmly in control of the mosque after a decade (around 1974), he started implementing what he thought was the correct interpretation of Islam. Thus the earlier

[15] Arwal became a separate district in September 2001. It is located north of Gaya. During the time of Muhammad Shahîr ad-Dîn's migration, it was part of Gaya district. Bodh Gaya is a town located within Gaya district. Both taken together constitute the 'urban' areas of Gaya district. The total urban population in Gaya district according to the 1991 census is only 13.35 per cent.

[16] For the uses of dreams, cf. Green (2003: 287–313); Saiyed and Talib (1985: 203–204).

[17] Reason cited by Barakatî Miyân, a 73-year-old 'reformed' native and sometimes associated with the Madrasat diyâ’ al-‘ulûm, interviewed on October 3, 2002.

practice of keeping the funeral cot within the precincts of the mosque, the ritual practice of washing the mosque once a year with *ghî* [clarified butter associated mostly with Hindu rituals and considered holy for being the extract of milk of the sacred cow] and the lighting of earthen lamps [*diyâ'*] on important religious occasions, such as the Prophet's birthday [*mawlid*] and the night in which the Qur'ân descended from heaven to earth [*shâb-i qadr*], were all stopped.

Ritual practices such as the above were commonly widespread in the sub-continent[18] and it was these very practices which were termed as *bid'a* by the Deoband School. Terming them as Hindu influences on Islam, they argued that Islamic monotheism brooked no compromise and that none except God had the right to be worshipped. It was these very ideas which were being implemented by Mawlânâ Shahîr ad-Dîn in Bodh Gaya. What remains to be understood is how, despite initial opposition, he succeeded in making Deoband's interpretation of Islam acceptable to the majority of the Muslims in the area. Clearly, only his subjective will cannot be a sufficient explanation. What then were the objective conditions conducive to his mission? For Mawlânâ Shahîr ad-Dîn, this was possible only due to his singular devotion to God's work of spreading the religion of Islam, his success being interpreted as the clear proof that his (Deobandî) interpretation of Islam is the only correct one. Interestingly enough, he does not blame the people who opposed him at that time, terming all those reactions as being committed during the period of *jâhiliyya* [lit.: ignorance; originally denoting the conditions in Arabia before the advent of Islam] and hence liable to be forgiven.

The 'Field' of the Madrasat Diyā' al-'Ulūm

According to Mawlânâ Shahîr ad-Dîn, the present structure of the mosque and *madrasa* is not older than two decades. Indeed, it was his lobbying during the second term of the Congress government of Indirâ Gândhî (assassinated 1984), which made it possible for the *madrasa* to appropriate the present land for itself. Actually, the land was apportioned as part of a tourism development project in the late 1970s, and people living in the area were evacuated after due compensation. As happens with many a plan in India, the project never took off and was

[18] For north India, cf. Crooke (1917: 152–154); for Bengal, cf. Roy (1983: 31–32, 35).

later scrapped. The post Emergency Congress government, in an attempt to shed its authoritarian and anti-minority image, was more than willing to hand over the acquired land to Mawlânâ Shahîr ad-Dîn for the purpose of enlarging the *madrasa*. The *madrasa* reached its present shape during the late 1980s and now boasts of an imposing building housing separately the Mawlânâ's family (as the patron [*sarparast*]), teachers' quarters and living quarters for more than 150 students.

It was perhaps a coincidence that around the same time we see the development of Bodh Gaya on the tourist circuit, which gave the sleepy town a trading character. This is not to say that there were no tourists before the 1980s. Indeed, Bodh Gaya has always been one of the sacred sites of Buddhism and pilgrims from all over the world come to pay their homage to the Mahâbodhi temple. However, it was only in the early 1980s that, under the various schemes of governments of the day, a permanent tourist complex started developing. Today the town has two sources of income. The first is from the flow of money during the 'pilgrim season' but, more importantly, the economy is sustained by the tourists all round the year, who come for more secular interests than the pilgrims. This inflow of tourists has spawned a whole service industry supporting it. Muslims were among the first to take the opportunity of opening new businesses. They are well represented through a number of shops and other hotels that they own for catering to the inflow of tourists. In my interviews on their denominational affiliation, the majority of them happened to be followers of the Deoband school of Islam. Diyâ' al-'ulûm and its affiliate *madâris* serve as their religious center in the sense that they offer their prayers in its mosque and often turn to Mawlânâ Shahîr ad-Dîn for guidance in religious matters. Most of these Muslims happen to come from the neighbouring town of Gaya, which has a sizable Muslim population, a majority of whom belong to the Deobandî tradition. While this continuity of denominational affiliation is quite understandable, it is equally important to note that the importance of the Madrasat diyâ' al 'ulûm is linked with the growth of Bodh Gaya as a trading town based on tourism. Muslims who are native to Bodh Gaya and who had initially been Barelwîs have now turned towards the Deobandî path. The reason given for their 'conversion' is that their previous understanding of Islam was incorrect, being closer to Hinduism. Now they feel a sense of corporate Muslim identity and also feel proud of the fact that most of the 'well-to-do-Muslims' [local English for those who are economically prosperous or in government service] are Deobandîs.

Behind this newfound disposition of these Muslims towards Deobandî Islam, the point cannot be missed that there seems to be some kind of correspondence between an urban lifestyle and the interpretation of Islam preached by Deoband. In its rejection of shrine-based worship, which involves much time and money on the part of the devotee, Deoband—exemplified here by the Madrasat diyâ' al-'ulûm—offers them a much simplified, clear-cut version of Islam, which is at once non-ritualistic and more suited to the lifestyle of urban areas where time is important. It is not a coincidence that the initial appeal of Deoband was among these sections of Indian Muslims.[19] As reflected in Bodh Gaya, this affinity between its Muslims and the Madrasat diyâ' al-'ulûm is not so much due to their altered religious conviction but rather due to very mundane factors such as urbanization and its linkages with other centers of Deobandî Islam (in this case Gaya) with which its economical interest is inextricably interwoven. The increasing acceptance of Deoband, therefore, does not seem to have to do with the superiority of its interpretation but rather due to the changing socio-economic profile of Indian Muslims and the changes in lifestyles accompanying it. The point is corroborated by the fact that in rural parts of Gaya, it is still Barelwî Islam that is practiced by the majority of Muslims.[20]

The increasing acceptance of the Madrasat diyâ' al-'ulûm, however, does not translate into an increasing number of local Muslim children accessing this *madrasa*. In fact there were only 25 students, out of a total of 154, who belonged to Bodh Gaya, none of them being boarders. Part of the reason seems to the ample availability of primary schools (both government as well as private schools) in the town. But perhaps the most important reason seems to be that the teachers of this *madrasa* are not themselves natives. In the other Deobandî *madâris* of the town (there are in all three, all founded after the Madrasat diyâ' al 'ulûm; a fact which again attests to the growing acceptance of Deobandî Islam in the area), one finds native students in larger numbers;[21] the reason

[19] Cf. Metcalf (1982: 88).

[20] My visits to rural areas of Bodh Gaya were a constant reminder of the Barelwî dominance here. These denominational rivalries sometimes turn unpleasant, too. I was witness to one such incident in which a Mawlânâ was being expelled from a *madrasa* on the charge of spreading 'Deobandism' [*deobandiyyat*] and confusion among Muslims of the area.

[21] However, most of them are in the *Hifz* course. In the post-*Hifz* courses, the percentages of these native students decline substantially. Most of them would

I think again is that the teachers also are native to the place. As will be made clear, the pattern of *madâris'* recruitment depends to a great extent on the place of origin of the teachers. The majority of the students of Madrasat diyâ' al 'ulûm belong to the rural areas of Belaganj and Jahânâbâd.[22] The reason for this, again, seems to be that out of 10 teachers, 8 belong to these areas and know the families of these students personally. Another important reason seems to be the lack of primary schooling in the area. This is not to say that there are no schools in the area. Far from it, there are schools even in the villages from where some of these students come. But teacher absenteeism is so high that for all practical purposes the schools remain closed for the better part of the year. Secondly, schools are so dilapidated that there can be no classes during the rainy season. Apart from these 'objective' causes, parents send their wards to the Madrasat diyâ' al 'ulûm for a variety of other reasons.[23] Some families send their sons, as they want at least one *hâfiz* [i.e. one who had memorized the entire Qur'ân] in the family; some send them for inculcating Islamic character and discipline [*islâmî tarbiyyat*]. But for the majority of the families, sending one or two children to a *madrasa* relieves them of a financial burden, which is quite understandable in families with meagre means of income and large family size (the average size of the family was approximately seven persons). As referred to above, the majority of teachers of the Madrasat diyâ' al-'ulûm come from these very areas. On further inquiry, it came to our notice that teachers often have a role in convincing parents to send their children to the *madâris* where they teach. This kind of recruitment is functional for both the parents as well as the *madrasa* teachers. For the teachers concerned, it brings added prestige within the *madrasa* as being able to bring students for religious education [*dînî ta'lîm*]. For the parents of these students, on the other hand, it provides an additional sense of security, since their children are under the watchful eye of someone whom they know very well. In societies where state structures have not yet seeped into the everyday

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later on join some government school. During interviews, parents considered it necessary first to instill '*islâmî tarbiyyat*' among their children and then send them for 'secular' schooling.

[22] Belaganj is within Gaya district, while Jahanabad, initially in Gaya, is now a separate district.

[23] The reasons cited here are based on personal interviews with ten families whose children were studying in the Madrasat diyâ' al-'ulûm.

life of its citizens, the importance of these informal networks of security and support cannot be underestimated.

It might seem intriguing that these villages are Deobandî in orientation. In fact, during interviews, many parents could not fully explain why they chose this *madrasa* over another *madrasa* of a different denomination which was closer to their area. But somehow they had a notion that Deobandî Islam is the right one. Regular batches of activists of the missionary movement Tablîghî Jamâ‘at[24] coming to their villages may be a reason. But more importantly, the lower-caste and -class Muslim inhabitants of these villages are for most part dependent on what is called the money order economy. The migration from these areas is, in the first place, towards the metropolis of Kolkata, where they work as petty traders or as seasonal labourers and where 'Deobandism' has had a long tradition. It is therefore not surprising that most of the articulate members of these villages who knew about denominational differences happened to be migrant workers in Kolkata themselves. Being the successful members of the community, their view on correct Islamic practice carries much weight and contributes to the acceptance of Deobandî Islam even in a rural setting. It also came to our notice that, due to small landholdings of Muslims in the area, the total produce from the land is not sufficient to sustain a family of large size. They therefore have to depend on subsidiary income, which in this case takes them to Kolkata, where they come in contact with Deobandî thought.

Economy, Pedagogy and Technologies of Capital Production

Despite repeated requests, I could not verify the annual expenditure of the *madrasa* from its accounts registers. According to Mawlânâ Shahîr ad-Dîn, however, it is more than Rs 200,000. The source of income of this *madrasa* is through local charity, contributed by Muslims of Gaya, Bodh Gaya, Belaganj and Jahânâbâd. In the towns of Bela and Jahânâbâd,

[24] The 'faith movement' started by Mawlânâ Muhammad Ilyâs (d. 1944) during the late 1920s. The Tablîgh movement aims at revitalization of Islam through individual regeneration. The movement has close links with Deobandî Islam, with Mawlânâ Ilyâs' family having a long association with Deoband and its sister *madrasa* at Sahâranpûr, Mazâhir al-‘ulûm. Deobandi *madâris* like the Madrasat diyâ’ al-‘ulûm serve as institutional networks for visiting batches of *tablîghî*s in the area, in the sense of providing them with boarding and other facilities.

the *madrasa* has a share in the crop produce, and every year a certain portion of the crop or the proceeds from it are assigned for the *madrasa*, the collection of which is at times personally supervised by Mawlânâ Shahîr ad-Dîn himself. The Mawlânâ vehemently denies any foreign funding for this *madrasa*, although he did concede that his well-wishers in big cities like Kolkata do help the *madrasa* from time to time. The annual proceeds from the sale of *charm-i qurbânî* [i.e. the hides of sacrificed animals on the Muslim festival of *'Îd al-adhâ*] also go to this *madrasa* from areas where it has influence and from where it derives its clientele. The Mawlânâ was categorical in his insistence that *madâris* should not take any money from the government. According to him, any contribution from the state is bound to have its effect [*athar*] on the *madrasa*. He feared that such a move would make the *madâris* dependent on the state and its 'independence' would be threatened. *Madâris* will have to make curricular changes and then the service of the religion will suffer.

While most of the students of this *madrasa* are *ajlâf* Muslims, the funding comes mostly from the *ashrâf* Muslims in its area of operation.[25] In the towns of Belaganj and Jahânâbâd, the contribution of those families who send their wards to this *madrasa* is not as substantial as compared to the contribution of *ashrâf* Muslims of the same town who interestingly do not send their own children to this *madrasa*. The rationale for this is that giving money for religious purposes has always been part of Islamic piety and no one wants to lose the opportunity to earn merit. Since the majority of the students of the Madrasat diyâ' al-'ulûm are *ajlâf* and very poor, it is reasoned that giving money to this *madrasa* also serves the charitable purpose of helping the poor from among the community. It is in this sense that the Madrasat diyâ' al-'ulûm connects to the original Deobandî principle of taking their understanding of religion to the lower-caste and -class Muslims. While indeed commendable in relieving many poor families of feeding their children as well as giving them a modicum of respectability and mobility in Muslim society, the point should not be lost that the Madrasat diyâ' al-'ulûm is also functional for the upper class Muslims of the area, since the presence of *madâris* is bound to exclude a sizable number of competitors for scarce government services.

[25] A pattern which was also true for initial years of Deoband. Cf. Metcalf (1982: 248–251).

Writing almost a century earlier, Durkheim noted that changes in ideas of knowledge in complex societies and the means by which such ideas are transmitted result from continual struggles among competing groups within society, each of which seeks domination and influence.[26] Durkheim considered educational systems, like other social institutions, to be tied to prevailing social structures. Extending this argument to the present study, we can safely argue that the establishment of any educational institution, including *madâris*, should therefore be analyzed in relation to various social groups in society. More recently the works of Pierre Bourdieu and his associates have sought to demonstrate ways in which seemingly egalitarian social institutions serve to maintain class domination in society. Through an analysis of the French educational system, they have demonstrated the contributions of schools towards the maintenance and perpetuation of class privileges, which they broadly term social reproduction. Social reproduction in this sense is a relational term which encapsulates '*the reproduction of the relation between the groups or classes.*'[27] Central to their argument is the association of 'cultural capital' with the privileged classes, which enables them to 'decode' signs and symbols of school pedagogy much more easily as compared to the less privileged classes, whose 'habitus' does not equip them for a similar exercise.[28]

[26] Cf. Eickelman (1978: 486).

[27] Bourdieu and Passeron (1977a: 54) [italics in the original].

[28] It is important to note that most of the concepts of Bourdieu, apart from having immense explanatory power, are at the same time integrated and related methodological tools to move beyond the infrastructure-superstructure debate within sociology and social anthropology. As such, justice cannot be done to them by explaining away these concepts in footnotes. Here we just note that Bourdieu uses the term capital not only in the sense of economic wealth but also for non-material resources of status, prestige, valued knowledge and privileged relationships. It refers to 'all goods, material and symbolic, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation' (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977b: 178). In addition to economic capital, therefore, there can be cultural capital (valued information of educational qualifications), social capital (valued relations with significant others) and symbolic capital (other forms of capital when recognized as legitimate, in the form of prestige and honour). The interesting thing about such a usage of capital is that forms of capital are interchangeable. Thus cultural capital can be converted into economic capital and vice versa. Cf. Bourdieu (1986: 252f.). Likewise the concept of 'habitus' provides Bourdieu with a methodological device to find a middle ground between phenomenology and structuralism. Habitus lies at the interface between the individual self and the larger social organism. It is the means by

While Bourdieu's analysis delves deep into the inner workings of the school system, the details of which need not detain us here, it is sufficient to note here that his conceptual apparatus helps in understanding ways in which differences of privileges among social groups can be maintained and reproduced even by seemingly innocuous institutions like the *madrasa*.

For Bourdieu, the success of any pedagogical action depends on the degree to which the pedagogical authority has become part of the common sense of the individual receiver, even in the absence of any pedagogical transmission. In other words, applying Bourdieu's understanding of pedagogical activity necessitates an inquiry into the strategies which go into the making of the habitus, since it is these processes that would tell how the social world is inscribed on the individual body, a process through which the social world becomes the extension of common sense.

In the Madrasat diyâ’ al-‘ulûm the majority of students have enrolled for courses in *hifz* [lit.: preservation, memorization (of the Qur’ân)], the post-*hifz* courses having relatively few students.[29] A normal day starts with the early morning prayer [*namâz-i fajr*], which all the students are required to attend. Some start with their lessons right after the *namâz*, which they are supposed to learn by heart and recite in front of their teachers. But formal classes [*durûs*] start only at 8 am. There are no separate classrooms and students generally squat in front of their teachers. Generally, a single teacher would give various lessons and, depending upon their class timings, students would come to these teachers. The teacher would first ask them a few questions about the

which the structures of the social order are inscribed, encoded or written into the individual body, in the most corporeal forms of gestures, accents, patterns of dress, etc. Through the habitus, the political mythology of the social order is 'made flesh.' Cf. Bourdieu (1990: 190).

[29] 'Hifz' constitutes the first stage of learning in a *madrasa*, which is the recitation and memorization of whole Qur’ân. Generally the students are of a very young age group (8–10 years), taking up to three years to finish the course and become 'Hâfiz.' It is only after this that they do higher courses like 'Mawlawiyyat' or 'Fâdilat.' Within the Madrasat diyâ’ al ‘ulûm, however, there were only four years of studies after *Hifz*, which did not lead to any degree. The students after completing these four years are required to go to other bigger Deobandî *madâris* to gain degrees of 'Mawlawiyyat,' 'Fâdilat' or 'Faqîh.' From this *madrasa* most of the students interviewed planned to go to a *madrasa* near Benares. This was the same *madrasa* from where the principal of the *madrasa* had completed his studies.

lesson which he gave the previous day and then proceed with the next lesson. The morning class breaks for breakfast, which is served at 9:30 am. Classes resume again at 10 am and go on until 5 pm in the evening, breaking in between for lunch and prayers. The students get spare time between 5 and 7 pm during which they are free to leave the precincts of the *madrasa*; the objective of this is that they should do some exercises to keep their bodies healthy. Dinner is served at 8 pm, after which also some students continue reading in the mosque/class, while most of them would retire for the day.

Teachers share the same precincts, although they stay in different quarters. They are therefore constantly available for any clarification which students want after class hours, an option not available in government schools. At the same time, this presence of teachers within the same space also leads to surveillance and control of the students. Control is inbuilt within *madrasa* pedagogy, often going to the extent of control over students' bodies. A *tâlib*'s way of dressing (*kurta-pâjâma*, which is considered an 'Islamic dress,' along with a skull cap are mandatory), talking (never in a raised voice and always with a lower gaze when talking to teachers), etc. are constantly watched and students are reprimanded on any breach of 'proper' conduct. Over the years such surveillance leaves an indelible mark on students' understanding of their own bodies as well as its presentation in front of others.

The role of teachers is very important in such a setting. Teachers are considered as fathers, who, apart from imparting knowledge, are responsible for the correct discipline and character of every student. The authority pattern within the household, in which the father is the central figure in the authority structure, gets replicated within the *madrasa* setting, thus embedding such patterns of authority deep within the minds of students. This homily between the home and *madrasa* is further strengthened by various techniques of corporeal punishments. Control can be further seen through the indexing of class timings with that of breakfast, lunch and dinner. Often denial of food is considered a very effective form of punishment. For children who come from families that can afford only two meals a day, this form of punishment is enough for them to comply with the '*madrasa* regime.' As noted above, control of students was also reflected in the students' 'proper' way of talking, sitting and even reading in front of teachers. Taken together, these constitute 'technologies of power' which determine the conduct of individuals inasmuch as they submit an individual

to certain ends or domination.[30] Within the settings of Madrasa diyâ' al-'ulûm, these are referred to as the *adab* [exemplary behaviour], which teachers are mandated to teach the students along with knowledge [*'ilm*]. Education [*ta'lîm*], therefore, incorporated within it both the mind and the body.

One finds very little writing in this *madrasa*. Mostly students would read aloud a particular portion of a text in front of a teacher who would then comment on the student or make corrections. Writing about medieval Cairo, Jonathan Berkey argues that the practice of reading a text aloud helped in reinforcing the authority of the teacher, since the reading of the student had to be constantly checked against that of the *shaykh*.[31] Similarly, solitary reading was regarded as an affront to the status of the teachers and was actively discouraged in medieval Damascus.[32] Similar to Jewish tradition, the practice of reading aloud is also considered a very important aid in the memorization of texts. Such a regime of hierarchy, control and surveillance starts early for these students. As mentioned earlier, children doing *hifz* belong to the age group 8–10 years. For three years they are supposed to do nothing else but memorize the Qur'ân, since most of the teachers are of the opinion that everything else, like learning to write, etc. during this period constitutes a distraction. After three years the impact of such pedagogy can only be fathomed.

In my eyes, these pedagogic techniques constitute an important part in the formation of 'habitus' of an average *madrasa* student. As referred to above, 'habitus' is the total ideational environment of a person, which includes the person's beliefs and dispositions, and prefigures everything that that person may choose to do. Interestingly enough, a person's 'habitus' cannot be fully known to the person, as it exists largely within the realm of the unconscious and includes things as visceral as body movements and postures; it also includes the most basic aspects of thought and knowledge about the world, including about the 'habitus' itself.[33] In normal social situations, a person relies upon a large store of scripts and a large store of knowledge, which present that person with a certain picture of the world and how she or he thinks to behave within it. The concept of 'habitus' brings to

30 Cf. Martin et al. (1988: 18).
31 Cf. Berkey (1992: 41).
32 Cf. Chamberlain (2002: 73–74).
33 Cf. Robbins (2000: 26–27).

attention the fact that there are unlimited options for action that a person would never think of, and therefore those options do not really exist as possibilities. For an average student of this *madrasa*, therefore, his future choices will be made only in accordance with the requisite 'capitals' which his habitus possesses. Madrasa diyâ’ al-‘ulûm invests its students with social capital (in the form of Deobandî social networks which they become aware of and maintain during their stay at the *madrasa*) as well as certain kind of cultural capital, which equips them with the finesse of social discourse appropriate for an *‘âlim*, and at the same time transforms them as persons worthy of emulation for the *ajlâf* members of their area.

The *madrasa* also equips its students with educational capital through a very restricted definition of *‘ilm*, similar to the mother institution in Deoband. Following the reformulated *dars-i nizâmî*[34] of Deoband, the curriculum of this *madrasa* does not permit the teaching of anything other than viewpoints of Islam as defined by Deoband. Books on the so-called 'rational religious sciences' [*ma‘qûlât*] are too far and few in between; those prescribed are not taught in the *dars*, but are rather meant for self-study. On the other hand, in the so-called 'transmitted religious sciences' [*manqûlât*], books on *hadîth* predominate.[35] Moreover, the study of these religious texts is in itself so rigorous that the student hardly gets time to study other subjects. The Madrasat diyâ’ al-‘ulûm, like any other *madrasa*, instills a specific kind of 'capital' among its students by way of its pedagogy, while at the same time divesting them of all kinds of other potential 'capitals' which

[34] The fabled curriculum of pre-colonial Islamic education, designed by and named after Mullâ Nizâm ad-Dîn (d. 1748) of Farangî Mahall in Lucknow in the early 18th century. The syllabus had a preponderance of the rational religious sciences over the transmitted sciences. The current *dars-i nizâmî*, adopted and changed by Deoband, reversed this emphasis in favor of the transmitted sciences, particularly *hadîth* studies. Cf. Metcalf (1982: 100f.).

[35] There is a distinct political reason for the popularity of *hadîth* studies. Relating to the everyday practices of Muslims, its importance is most felt in times of political uncertainty and upheavals. Post-1857 Indian history was indeed one of those times. Earlier, during the unstable times of the Delhi Sultanate, *hadîth* studies were similarly valued. Cf. Nizami (1996). However, the 18th–19th century emphasis on the study of *hadîth* had much to do with the location of 'non-Islamic' practices within the everyday life of ordinary lower-caste and -class Muslims. The sincere attempts to cleanse them of all the so-called Hindu influences were started in earnest through the popularisation of *hadîth* studies.

they could have acquired in other situations. For an average graduate of this *madrasa*, the options are therefore circumscribed by the capital which their habitus possesses. Most go back to their father's profession, attaching with them the prestige of an *'âlim*, supplementing the meagre family income. Few would go on to establish their own *madrasa*, the only option which offers them the full potential of utilizing the capital that their 'habitus' possesses.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has tried to highlight the ways in which a local-level Deobandî *madrasa* is intertwined with everyday operative structures of class and caste in Indian Muslim society. For the recipients of its education, mainly the *ajlâf*-Muslims, the Madrasat diyâ' al-'ulûm provides a modicum of social and cultural mobility. Linking this local-level *madrasa* with the founding structural principles of the Dâr al-'ulûm at Deoband, the chapter argues that contemporary *madâris* need to be studied as hegemonic institutions having an ideological function of maintaining the existing class relations within Muslim society. In producing a certain 'habitus', *madâris* produce the conditions as well the agents of their own reproduction. However, class being a relational category, the pedagogical action of *madâris* has contributed to the overall social and class reproduction of Indian Muslim society. Serving to limit competition for scarce resources, it is not surprising that *madrasa* education today is universally supported by the upper-class Muslims in India. In highlighting the 'reformist' and 'nationalist' credentials of *madâris* in India, the intellectual community has so far maintained a consensual and complicit silence on issues of caste and class dominance within Indian Muslim society. In the process, they have—consciously or unconsciously—reproduced the pet elite Muslim agenda of identity. It is perhaps time to break this silence, for Islam in India cannot continue to be carried on the tired shoulders of poor lower-caste Muslims, while the 'benefits of Islam' continue to be cornered by privileged sections of the Muslim communities in India.

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8

Islamic Education in a Tamil Town: The Case of Kilakkarai[1]

Torsten Tschacher

Introduction

In standard accounts of Islam and Muslim communities in India, the Tamil-speaking areas of south India receive scant attention. Generally, Tamil Nadu[2] has been considered peripheral to Muslim history in South Asia, if it has been considered at all. Yet interest in this region and its Muslim communities has been rising in the last two decades, leading to a number of monographs and articles in English on a variety of topics, such as the characteristics of Tamil Muslim society, politics,

[1] The information for this chapter has been gathered mainly during a stay in Kilakkarai in May–June 2003. I have to thank Mawlawî V.V.A. Salahuddeen ʻÂlim, Principal, Jâmiʻa ʻArûsiyya, and H.S. Mawlânâ Syed Masood, Vice-Principal, Jâmiʻa Sayyid Hamîda, for sharing information on their *madâris* with me; I also have to thank Mr. M. Abdul Kareem, Kilakkarai, and Mr. Ahamed Rifai, Madras, for their help.

The transcription of names and terms has proven to be rather complicated, with two languages (Arabic, Tamil) and three scripts (Arabic, Tamil, Roman) being involved. While I have largely followed the system of transliteration employed in this volume, a few exceptions have to be noted. For publications in Tamil and their authors, I employ the standard scientific transcription minus the diacritics. I have also transcribed Arabic terms and names from Tamil in a few instances, primarily in the case of proper names of Tamil poets (e.g. Ceyku Aptul Kâtir instead of Shaykh ʻAbd al-Qâdir) or to assist recognition when the phrase preserves Arabic case endings (e.g. Usvatun Hasanâ instead of Uswa Hasana). The names of my informants have been rendered in the Anglicized orthography that they themselves employed on visiting cards and the like.

[2] Even though the term Tamil Nadu [Tamil-land] strictly speaking refers only to one of the states of the Indian Union, which was created out of the former Madras State in 1968, I will use the term in this chapter also for earlier periods to denote the Tamil-speaking regions of southeastern India.

saint veneration, and the copious Islamic literature in Tamil.[3] Yet despite this recent surge in publications on Tamil Muslims, many aspects of their history, society and culture are not yet well understood. Most studies by non-Muslims focus on the relations between Tamil Muslim culture and practices and the wider non-Muslim society of Tamil Nadu, and tend to ignore or even downplay ties to the wider Muslim world, thereby reinforcing the image of Tamil Muslims as somehow remaining outside of, or peripheral to, this world.[4]

Two aspects of Tamil Muslim society make it of particular interest to the student of Muslim societies in India. First, in no other Indian state has there been so much interaction between the Hanafite 'mainstream' Islam of northern India and the Shâfi'ite Islam of trading communities along India's maritime rim.[5] This encounter between different Muslim traditions is documented in the local Tamil, Arabic, Persian and Urdu literature and continues to have an effect on Islam in the region. Second, Tamil Nadu has not been the *cul-de-sac* of Islamic expansion in South Asia that it appears to be from a north Indian perspective, but rather one of India's most important interfaces with the Muslim societies of Southeast Asia. These links have yet to be studied in any detail, but the presence of sizeable Tamil Muslim communities in states like Malaysia and Singapore attests to their continued importance.[6]

Islamic education in Tamil Nadu prior to the late 19th century has not yet received any attention from scholars. What little has been done

[3] For Tamil Muslim society, cf. Mines (1986), Fanselow (1989, 1996); Tamil Muslim politics are dealt with in More (1997); for saint veneration, cf. the highly influential work of Susan Bayly (1989); studies of Islamic Tamil literature generally remain limited to isolated texts, cf. Narayanan (2000) and Shulman and Subrahmanyam (1993); the best overview of Islamic Tamil literature in English remains the seminal work of M.M. Uwise, first published in 1953; cf. Uwise (1990), Tschacher (2001: 1–72), for a survey of Arabic-Tamil script and literature. More (2004) discusses the social context of the rise of print culture among Tamil Muslims.

[4] Cf. Bayly (1989) and Narayanan (2000) for these tendencies. Ironically, J.B.P. More, one of Bayly's most vociferous critics, may himself inadvertently contribute to this image by sometimes uncritically adopting the stance of early 20th century reformers, cf. More (2004: esp. 47–49, 101–110); an exception to this trend is Susan Schomburg's recent dissertation (2003).

[5] Most of the Shâfi'ite communities along India's west coast, e.g. in Kerala, have been much more isolated from Hanafite Islam. Cf. Fanselow (1989) for a rough historical outline of various Shâfi'ite and Hanafite communities in the region.

[6] Cf. e.g. Fakhri (2002).

focusses primarily on the scholarly networks in the domains of the *nawwâb*s of Arcot, which are more closely linked with north India than with the Tamil regions further south.[7] The absence from the Tamil South of Muslim states and the concurrent lack of funding of large-scale educational institutions have led to the impression that Islamic learning was non-existent in these regions. Yet even though we may never know as much about early Islamic scholarship in Tamil Nadu, as we know about some of the northern regions, there is nevertheless enough material that can be utilized to study such scholarship. Some Tamil poems dealing with Islamic doctrines and law are known from the pre-19th century period. Furthermore, both Arabic and Tamil poems from the region allude to texts, doctrines and ideas that can be used to reconstruct the type of Islamic knowledge that was current in the region prior to the late 19th century.

In the late 19th century, the establishment of large-scale *madâris* in northern Tamil Nadu had a strong impact on the development of Islamic education in the region, as will be discussed later.[8] The 20th century has seen a gradual reorientation of most southern Tamil *madâris* from the earlier Indian Ocean networks towards the North, reinforced by the creation of new boundaries between India, Sri Lanka, and various Southeast Asian states. This reorientation is most visible in the dominance of a modified version of the north Indian *dars-i nizâmî* syllabus among *madâris* in contemporary Tamil Nadu.

The town of Kilakkarai has played an important role in the development of Islamic education in the southern, Shâfi‘ite regions of coastal Tamil Nadu since at least the 17th century. Kilakkarai, together with the town of Kayalpattinam further south, was a center for the production of Islamic literature in Tamil and Arabic, and home to a number of important scholars. The town, with its peculiar marriage and residence patterns, women's lanes and a general reputation for religious conservatism, is of great importance for the development of Islamic scholarship on both sides of the Gulf of Mannar.[9] There exist two major

[7] Cf. Kokan (1974). Kokan does include some of the more important Tamil *‘ulamâ’* in his discussion, but up to now Shu‘ayb (1993) remains the only study that concentrates primarily on Tamil scholars.

[8] There is more information available on these *madâris*, but there have been no major studies yet; besides Kokan (1974) and Shu‘ayb (1993), cf. Ameer Ali (1989) and Desai (1978).

[9] Cf. Shu‘ayb (1993: 80–81); Mânâ Makkîn (2000: 65–68).

institutions of Islamic education in Kilakkarai nowadays, the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya and the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda. The roots of the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya extend back to the early 19th century and possibly even before that, while the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda is a relative newcomer to the educational scene of the town.

Local traditions of Islamic scholarship have been influenced both by models of Islamic education ultimately derived from north India, and, more recently, by the extension of secular education in the town. The aim of this chapter, apart from contributing to a little-known field of scholarship on Muslim South Asia, is to assess to what extent various educational systems interacted to shape the current state of Islamic education in the two major Kilakkarai *madâris*. For this purpose, the first part of the chapter will consider the history of Islamic education in Kilakkarai, and the impact another *madrasa*, the Madrasat bâqiyyât as-sâlihât in Vellore, had on the syllabus of *madâris* in Kilakkarai and elsewhere in Tamil Nadu. The second part will detail the history and current situation of the two major contemporary *madâris* in Kilakkarai, outlining their activities, institutional affiliations and recent reforms in the syllabus, before returning to the question of the impact of different educational systems on Islamic education in Kilakkarai in the conclusion.

Kilakkarai and Islamic Education in Tamil Nadu— The Historical Background

History of Islamic Education in Kilakkarai

Kilakkarai [lit.: East Coast] is situated on the Gulf of Mannar in Ramanathapuram district, ca. 15 km south of Ramanathapuram town. In 2001 the town had 30,472 inhabitants.[10] Portuguese sources state that 'Quilicare' was already an important Muslim trading town in the early 16th century.[11] Being a center for pearl fishing, the Muslim traders of Kilakkarai were apparently able to draw considerable profit from this business even under pressure from the Dutch during the 17th century.

Kilakkarai's 'golden age' was the late 17th and early 18th century. Under the patronage of the rulers of Ramanathapuram, the merchant

[10] Figure taken from the Census of India web page: http://www.censusindia.net [accessed on November 29, 2004]; the spelling Keelakarai is employed in this source.

[11] Cf. Dames (1921: 120–121).

magnate Cîtakkâti was able to circumvent Dutch monopolistic policies. The wealthy merchants patronised Tamil poets, among them Umâruppulavar, author of the *Cîrâppurânam*, the most important Islamic literary work in Tamil of all periods. By the late 17th century, Kilakkarai was also graced by the presence of Shaykh Sadaqatallâh, considered to be one of Tamil Nadu's most important religious scholars.[12]

Given the current state of research, it is difficult to outline the development of Islamic education in Kilakkarai prior to the mid-19th century, or, for that matter, the development of Islamic education in Tamil Nadu as a whole. Most of the information has to be gathered from a number of recent publications, which very often do not distinguish whether a piece of information comes from the Arabic and Tamil literature of the period, the oral traditions current among the families of Kilakkarai, or is simply the interpretation or speculation of the current-day scholar. Moreover, while the accounts of Tamil authors may at times be exaggerated, Urdu-speaking authors tend to actively ignore the contribution of Tamils to south Indian Islamic culture.

Moreover, an historical overview of Islamic education in Kilakkarai has to take into account the fact that the information available until the 20th century refers almost exclusively to institutions of higher Islamic education for men. Institutions imparting basic skills such as reading the Qur'ân are largely absent from the record, though it is highly probable that they existed. The same can be said regarding women's religious education.[13]

The first clear evidence of higher Islamic education in Kilakkarai dates to the 17th century, and is closely tied to the name of Shaykh Sadaqatallâh (d. 1703),[14] who was born in Kayalpattinam. Sadaqatallâh

[12] For Cîtakkâti and his period, cf. Shulman and Subrahmanyam (1993).

[13] I am unaware of any larger *madrasa* imparting religious knowledge to women in Kilakkarai, along lines similar to the Madrasat 'Â'isha Siddîqa or the Mu'askar ar-Rahmân Women's Arabic College in Kayalpattinam. Yet as Susan Schomburg reports from Kayalpattinam, many neighborhood institutions offering religious education for women there are practically invisible if one does not know about their existence, especially if one happens to be a male non-Muslim; cf. Schomburg (2003: 190–193). For this reason, the remainder of the paper will have to deal exclusively with male religious education.

[14] Dates given for most of the pre-19th century scholars in this paper should be considered as rough guidelines for the lifetimes of these personalities. Most of the dates are taken from Kokan (1974) and Shu'ayb (1993), who rarely state

had studied under Makhdûm Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qâdir as-Siddîqî 'Cinneyinâ' (d. 1660/1961), whose family is said to have originally come from Yemen, but had settled in the town of Adirampattinam, about 140 km north of Kilakkarai, nine generations earlier.[15] Makhdûm is also said to have been acquainted with Sadaqatallâh's father Sulaymân (d. 1668),[16] testifying to the existence of networks of Islamic scholars along the Tamil coast in the 17th century.

Sadaqatallâh is generally credited by Tamil authors with having established a *madrasa* in Kilakkarai. One author even claims that when he returned from the *hajj* he brought Arab scholars with him to teach in this *madrasa*, though it is not stated which part of the Arab world these scholars are supposed to have come from.[17] There can be no doubt about the importance of Shaykh Sadaqatallâh for the further development of Islam in the region. Students came from all over Tamil Nadu, and a number of these became important scholars in their own right. As Sadaqatallâh was also a *shaykh* of the Qâdiriyya brotherhood, he combined the roles of teacher and spiritual preceptor.[18] His importance is also brought out by the fact that few Tamil Muslim poets of the 18th and 19th centuries fail to praise him in the panegyric sections at the beginning of a poem. Some authors claim that Sadaqatallâh's descendants continued to manage the *madrasa* until about 1812, yet

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their sources for these dates. That we do not know much more about the lifetime of such an important poet as Kunankuti Mastân Câkipu, except for the fact that he lived in the first half of the 19th century, should alert us to the need for more detailed investigations concerning the history of Islam and individual Muslim scholars in the Tamil region.

[15] Kokan (1974: 53, n. 1, 55). claims that Makhdûm taught Sadaqatallâh in Adirampattinam, while Itrîs Maraikkâyar (1986: 49), and Shu‘ayb (1993: 477), both natives of Kilakkarai, maintain that by that time Makhdûm lived in Kilakkarai, where he is indeed buried. An Arabic poem by Sadaqatallâh, quoted in Shu‘ayb (1993: 371–372), speaks about Sadaqatallâh's arrival in Kilakkarai in February 1660. As Makhdûm died in late 1660 or in 1661, Sadaqatallâh either studied only a few months under him, or he had already been his student before coming to Kilakkarai.

[16] Cf. Kokan (1974: 53), Shu‘ayb (1993: 477). Kokan claims that Makhdûm was Sulaymân's teacher, while Shu‘ayb calls Makhdûm a 'classmate' of Sulaymân. Given that Makhdûm was about 17 years the senior of Sulaymân, I tend to favor Kokan's version.

[17] Cf. Ajmalkân (1985: 55–56).

[18] For a discussion of the interrelation between *madâris* and Sufi institutions, cf. the chapter by S. Zaheer Husain Jafri in this volume.

it is difficult to say to what extent Shaykh Sadaqatallâh established a *madrasa* as an institution, independent of himself as teacher, which continued to function after his death.[19]

Kilakkarai had continued throughout much of the 18th century to be a trading town, though during the 19th century its trade became more limited in range with the rise of Madras and other harbors. But contacts were especially close with Ceylon, and religious scholars from Kilakkarai played a significant role in Ceylonese Islam in that period.

The 19th century also saw the emergence of several *madâris* in Kilakkarai, the most important of which, both within the town as well as within the larger regional context, was the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya. This *madrasa*, made famous by the important scholar Imâm al-‘Arûs (d. 1898), has been the dominant institution of Islamic education in Kilakkarai throughout the 19th and most of the 20th centuries. Yet, beside it other *madâris* were established in the town, though most of them seem to have been rather short-lived. Shu‘ayb mentions an institution called Madrasat al-makhdûmiyya, which seems to have existed in the late 19th century in Kilakkarai, though I have not been able to find any further information concerning it.[20] More recent institutions include the Madrasat al-mawâlî, founded in 1974 by Dr Shu‘ayb himself,[21] and the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda, which is currently the largest *madrasa* in Kilakkarai.

More information regarding elementary Islamic education in the town also becomes available for the 20th century. A number of small schools, usually attached to mosques, teach the Arabic alphabet and reading of the Qur’ân, sometimes coupled with basic information on fundamentals of Islam such as prayer. These schools are often called *maktab*, but may also sometimes be styled *madrasa*. Children attend these schools beside secular education, before or after school or on weekends. Ideally, this elementary education is free of charge, but in fact the institutions receive donations on an irregular basis. Furthermore, gifts of money and betel were ceremonially offered to the teacher at the beginning of a course by the parents on a special tray.[22] My

[19] Cf. Shu‘ayb (1993: 633–634), Itrîs Maraikkâyar (1986: 53).
[20] Cf. Shu‘ayb (1993: 505).
[21] Cf. ibid.: 804.
[22] Some of my informants, whose families have traditional trading contacts with Indonesia, told me that the same custom, involving the same gifts and ceremonial tray, used to be practiced in northern Sumatra. For a general overview of

informants told me that this custom, though still practised by some families, is not very common nowadays, as it has obviously been branded as 'un-Islamic' by certain groups. Some secular schools managed by Muslims also offer classes in basic Islamic education on a voluntary basis. In some of the more traditional Muslim towns, such as Kilakkarai or Koothanallur, the students may be taught Arabic-Tamil, especially the specific letters used to write Tamil in Arabic script together with the Arabic alphabet, but knowledge of this alphabet is generally decreasing, at least in India (it may be a bit more widespread in Sri Lanka).[23]

Even though Kilakkarai is still widely considered in Tamil Nadu to be religiously conservative, its role in Islamic education in the state has diminished greatly when compared to the late 19th century. This is due to a number of reasons. Kilakkarai has become something of a backwater, with many of its richer families actually residing elsewhere (mainly in Madras). Furthermore, institutions of higher Islamic education have sprung up in many places, so that prospective students often have several *madâris* closer home than they used to have in the 19th century. The larger cities like Madras, Tiruchirappalli, and Madurai also offer a number of facilities not available in the smaller towns, like a greater range of Islamic booksellers.

The independence of India and Sri Lanka from the British has created a special situation for Kilakkarai and Islamic education there. Under British rule, contacts with Ceylon were extremely close, perhaps closer than with Madras and the northern parts of Tamil Nadu. This was reflected in the large number of students from Ceylon studying in *madâris* in Kilakkarai. Independence, and even more the Sri Lankan civil war since the 1980s and the resulting immigration restrictions, have disrupted these ties. Shu‘ayb notes that before the 1950s, students from eastern Ceylon would often come to study at places like Kayalpattinam and Kilakkarai on account of the scarcity of *madâris* in that region of Ceylon. The new immigration laws reduced the flow of students and the founding of a number of *madâris* in eastern Ceylon in the 1950s further decreased the attraction the south Indian *madâris* earlier had.[24]

'traditional' elementary Islamic education in the Tamil-speaking region, cf. Shu‘ayb (1993: 54–56).

[23] Cf. Shu‘ayb (1993: 117–122) and Tschacher (2001: 63–64) for some of the reasons that have led to the decline of Arabic-Tamil.

[24] Cf. Shu‘ayb (1993: 533–534).

A third reason for the decline of the importance of Islamic educational institutions in Kilakkarai for the whole of Tamil Nadu may lie in the rise of a number of *madâris* in northern Tamil Nadu, that are not only closer to the emerging metropolis of Madras, but also more closely linked to North India and developments in Islamic education there. Among these *madâris*, the Madrasat bâqiyyât as-sâlihât in Vellore has had the greatest impact on the development of Islamic education in Tamil Nadu. For a thorough understanding of the current state of Islamic education in Kilakkarai, it will be necessary to shed some light on this institution before considering the current state of affairs in Kilakkarai.

Vellore and the Vellore Syllabus

The late 19th century saw increased activity in the field of Islamic education all over Tamil Nadu. The introduction of letterpress printing enabled Muslim authors to disseminate religious knowledge more easily, especially as the Muslims were generally the most literate religious community in the region.[25] Religious manuals and poems proliferated, some of them encyclopaedic in character, others focussed more on topics of everyday concern, like marriage or the differences between the Shâfi‘ite and Hanafite schools of law. It was also in this period that the first Tamil translations of the Qur’ân were produced. Furthermore, some scholars wrote books specifically to impart religious knowledge to children.[26]

It is thus no wonder that a number of *madâris* were founded in this period. In 1851, the last *de jure nawwâb* of Arcot had started a *madrasa* in Madras, but after his death in 1855 and the abolition of the office of *nawwâb*, it was converted into an English high school in 1859.[27] But other *madâris* got successfully established, like the Madrasat manba’ al-anwâr in Lalpet (est. 1864),[28] the Madrasa-yi muhammadî in Madras (est. 1891), and the Madrasat manba’ al-‘ulyâ in Koothanallur (est.

[25] Cf. More (1997: 82–83), and especially More (2004).

[26] For these works, cf. Tschacher (2001: 20–33) and the references contained therein; cf. also Kokan (1982) for translations of the Qur’ân into Tamil. An extensive and very useful annotated list of Islamic books printed in Tamil in the Madras Presidency up to 1920 has recently been published in More (2004: Appendix I).

[27] Cf. Kokan (1974: 360–364, 517–518) and Shu‘ayb (1993: 514–515); Shu‘ayb claims that the Nawwâb was inspired to introduce free boarding and lodging at this *madrasa* after consulting with Imâm al-‘Arûs of Kilakkarai, but Kokan makes no mention of this.

[28] Desai gives its name as Manba’ al-‘ulûm; cf. Desai (1978: 68).

1892).[29] During the last decades of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th centuries, a number of *madâris* came to be founded in and around the town of Vellore in the former North Arcot district. Vellore was an important center under the *nawwâb*s of Arcot, and thus had close links with the Muslims of the Deccan and further north. Here, Tamil- and Urdu-speaking Muslims mixed more than in the areas of the southeastern coastal strip. As a result, here the culture of the Urdu-speaking Muslims intersected more with that of their Tamil-speaking coreligionists than in any other region. Important among these *madâris* were the Madrasat ma‘dan al-‘ulûm in Vaniyambadi (est. 1884), the Dâr al-‘ulûm latîfiyya in Vellore (est. 1885) and the Jâmi‘a dâr as-salâm in Oomerabad (est. 1924).[30] Yet none of them was to achieve the importance of the Madrasat bâqiyyât as-sâlihât in Vellore.

The family of Shâh ‘Abd al-Wahhâb (d. 1919), the founder of the *madrasa*, hailed originally from Madurai, but had settled in the town of Attur.[31] ‘Abd al-Wahhâb's father ‘Abd al-Qâdir shifted to Vellore after getting initiated into the Qâdiriyya there. ‘Abd al Wahhâb studied under various scholars in Vellore, Madras, and also in Mecca before returning to Vellore. In 1884, he founded the Madrasat bâqiyyât as-sâlihât there, which was to have a profound influence on the further development of *madrasa* education among Tamil-speaking Muslims, sometimes being called the 'Mother of *madâris*.' Graduates of this *madrasa*, recognizable by the title 'Bâqawî,' have found employment as teachers and preachers not only all over Tamil Nadu and Ceylon, but also among Tamil institutions in Southeast Asia.

As mentioned earlier, research on the history of *madâris* in Tamil Nadu is virtually lacking, and the *madâris* of Vellore are no exception. Even the voluminous works of Kokan and Shu‘ayb focus on individuals and their contributions to Islamic learning rather than on institutions. Yet the most important influence that the Madrasat bâqiyyât as-sâlihât had on the development of *madrasa* education in Tamil Nadu was the introduction of a modified version of the *dars-i nizâmî* syllabus

[29] Cf. Desai (1978: 60); Kokan (1974: 538–550, 560); More (1997: 54); Shu‘ayb (1993: 505–507, 799).

[30] Cf. Desai (1978: 57–61); Kokan (1974: 532–538, 558–559); More (1997: 54–55); Shu‘ayb (1993: 558–559, 568–571).

[31] In Tamil Nadu, there are several towns of that name, which simply means 'river-town.' Kokan identifies the Attur in Salem district as the home of ‘Abd al-Wahhâb's father, while Shu‘ayb places it in Dindigul district; cf. Kokan (1974: 528–529); Shu‘ayb (1993: 569).

of the Farangî Mahall in Lucknow.[32] One of my informants even considered the syllabus to be compulsory in Tamil Nadu. While this is not the case, the *dars-i nizâmî* is still the most common syllabus in Tamil Nadu, and it is thus necessary to take a look at the differences between the Vellore syllabus and its north Indian model in order to understand the current state of Islamic education in Kilakkarai.

The most obvious difference between the Vellore syllabus and its north Indian model is the use of Tamil as a language of elementary instruction.[33] In Vellore students can choose between a Tamil and an Urdu stream, i.e. for the first four years the language of instruction will be either Tamil or Urdu, and exams will be conducted in the chosen language during this period. But the main difference lies not in the use of a 'vernacular'[34] in class, but in the subjects taught and the books used for different subjects. I do not have the space to deal with the topic in detail here, so some general remarks will have to suffice.[35]

Generally, the syllabus as it is taught now seems to correspond most closely to the latest stage in the development of the *dars-i nizâmî*, which means that there must have been changes in the syllabus, as the present form of the *dars* has been achieved only after the founding of the Madrasat bâqiyyât as-sâlihât.[36] Yet even though there is much

[32] It should be noted that links between Farangî Mahall and northern Tamil Nadu are much older than the late 19th century, dating back to the arrival of ‘Abd al-‘Alî 'Bahr al ‘Ulûm' (d. 1810) in Madras in 1790, where he lies buried; cf. Kokan (1974: 272–232).

[33] I have to thank Imâm Syed Ali Baqavi of the Masjid Jamae Chulia and Ustâdh Mawlânâ Mawlawî M. Mohamed Mohideen Faizi of the Singapore Kadayanallur Muslim League, both in Singapore, for providing me with information on the syllabus.

[34] The use of the term 'vernacular' for Indian languages other than Urdu in an Islamic context is slightly distorting, as it conceals the fact that Urdu has emerged as a 'cosmopolitan' Islamic language rather recently, and that a special status for Urdu is not accepted by all Muslims in India. Many Tamil Muslims in the southern coastal areas do not consider Urdu to be a more appropriate vehicle for Islamic contents than Tamil.

[35] These remarks are based on comparing a list of Arabic works taught at one *madrasa* in Tamil Nadu, the Fayd al-anwâr Arabic College in Kadayanallur, which follows the Vellore syllabus, with appendices 1–3 in Malik (1997: 522–541). This list was supplied to me by M. Mohamed Mohideen Faizi.

[36] Cf. Malik (1997: 536). It should be noted that some Tamil *madrasa* graduates proceed to study at the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’ in Lucknow before returning to Tamil Nadu to teach in local *madâris*, and may thus have transmitted changes in the syllabus to the South; cf. Schomburg (2003: 177).

general agreement between the two syllabi, there are also some noteworthy differences, both in the subjects taught and in the texts used for different subjects.

With regard to the subjects, there seems to be less stress on the rational religious sciences, with the focus being on logic [*mantiq*]. On the other hand, two subjects are usually taught, which appear to be absent in the north Indian *dars-i nizâmî*, viz. the sacred history of Islam, embodied in the Prophet(s) and the companions of Muhammad, and Islamic mysticism [*tasawwuf*], taught by means of al-Ghazâlî's (d. 1111 AD) *Ihyâ' 'ulûm ad-dîn* [*The Revival of the Religious Sciences*], which is very popular with Tamil Muslims.

There is furthermore some variance in the texts used for teaching different subjects between the north and south Indian versions of the *dars-i nizâmî*. An important difference is that no Persian work seems to be used in teaching any subject. Generally, Persian is not taught widely in Tamil Nadu today, and it has never commanded the same influence among Tamil-speaking Muslims as among Urdu-speaking Muslims.[37] Furthermore, due to the presence of followers of the Shâfi'ite school of law in Tamil Nadu, Shâfi'ite law is taught beside Hanafite law in the relevant subjects (like *fiqh* and *usûl al-fiqh*), through works such as Tâj ad-Dîn as-Subkî's (d. 1370 AD) *Jam' al-Jawâmi'* [*The Collection of Collections*] and works by Jalâl ad-Dîn al-Mahallî (d. 1459).

There are further differences with regard to texts used for teaching, but these are the most important ones for the present purpose. Nevertheless, the differences between the two syllabi do not outweigh the similarities. The syllabus in use in Vellore and other *madâris* in Tamil Nadu is to be considered an adaptation of the *dars-i nizâmî*, not a separate syllabus, a fact that has definitely contributed to its spread in Tamil Nadu.

[37] Nevertheless, Persian seems to have been more popular several decades ago than it is now. One informant, who is a teacher of Persian, claimed that about 20 years ago most *madâris* taught Persian, while he estimated that nowadays only about 30 percent of the *madâris* still teach this language. Furthermore, he conceded that there was a clear distinction in the attitude towards Persian between Shâfi'ite and Hanafite *madâris*, Persian being much more popular among the latter (personal communication by Faqueer Mohamed Sirajudeen Ahmed Rashathi on September 14, 2004 in Singapore).

The Current Situation

The Present-Day *Madāris*

Currently, there are just two *madâris*, or 'Arabic Colleges,'[38] in Kilakkarai. These two Arabic Colleges, the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya and the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda, have played different roles in the development of Islamic education in Kilakkarai, for obvious historical reasons. While the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya dominated religious education in the town during the 19th century and much of the 20th century, the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda is a much more recent institution. The very different historical trajectories have had an impact on the current condition of the two *madâris*, and an overview of their development is thus necessary before considering the current situation.

The immediate roots of the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya go back to the early 19th century, to the arrival in Kilakkarai of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qâdir (d. 1850/1851), popularly known as Kîlakkarai Taikkâ Sâhib.[39] Kîlakkarai Taikkâ Sâhib had come from Kayalpattinam and married into one of the richest families in Kilakkarai. Much like Sadaqatallâh, he acted both as teacher and as *shaykh* of the Qâdiriyya brotherhood. A number of important Muslim Tamil authors of the 19th century, like Kunankuti Mastân Câkipu (d. mid-19th century) and 'Pulavar Nâyakam' Ceyku Aptul Kâtir (d. 1852), were reportedly his disciples and students. The remnants of Sadaqatallâh's *madrasa* seem to have been integrated into his growing body of students, providing the nucleus for the current Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya.[40] Some accounts stress the continuity of Kîlakkarai Taikkâ Sâhib's *madrasa* with the one allegedly founded by Sadaqatallâh,[41] while others make him the founder of the institution.[42]

[38] The term 'Arabic College' [Tamil: *arapi-k kallûri*] is common in Tamil Nadu for institutions of higher Islamic education and serves as a kind of English translation for *madrasa*, providing the Islamic equivalent of the Hindu 'Sanskrit Colleges.'

[39] *Taikkâ* is the Tamil form of Arabic *takiyya* and Persian *takya* [abode of a Sufi *shaykh*]. Though some authors (e.g. Kokan) persianize the name to Kîlakkarai Takya Sâhib, I have chosen to use the form preferred by Tamil authors. For accounts of Kîlakkarai Taikkâ Sâhib's life and works, cf. Kokan (1974: 442–452) and Itrîs Maraikkâyar (1986: 62–64).

[40] Cf. Shu‘ayb (1993: 634).

[41] Cf. e.g. Shu‘ayb (1993: 803); this is also the account given to me by the Principal of the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya.

[42] Cf. e.g. Kokan (1974: 444–445).

Yet even if the continuity with Sadaqatallâh's *madrasa* is denied, the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya is still older than many better-known ones, like the Madrasat bâqiyyât as-sâlihât,[43] and its claims to be the oldest existing *madrasa* in Tamil Nadu may be valid.

Central to the development of the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya was the role of Kîlakkarai Taikkâ Sâhib's son-in-law, Sayyid Muhammad b. Ahmad Leppai (d. 1898). Better known as 'Mâppillai Leppai' or 'Imâm al-‘Arûs,' he was not only a prolific author in Arabic and Arabic-Tamil, but also a capable organizer under whose tutelage an ever increasing number of students attended the *madrasa*, until, according to one claim, more than 400 students studied there.[44]

Imâm al-‘Arûs was born in Kayalpattinam in 1816, and came to Kilakkarai when he was still a boy.[45] He took classes with Kîlakkarai Taikkâ Sâhib, who was so impressed with this student that he married his youngest daughter to him in 1837. When Kîlakkarai Taikkâ Sâhib died in 1850 or 1851, Imâm al-‘Arûs took over the responsibility for the *madrasa*, as well as his father-in-law's position as Qâdirî *shaykh*. The *madrasa* offered free boarding and lodging to students, and had, therefore, to rely on donations and other sources of income.[46] Furthermore, he is supposed to have contributed to the *madrasa* out of the income of his own business activities.

Despite his responsibilities as head of the *madrasa*, Imâm al-‘Arûs apparently found the time to make extensive journeys. He travelled widely in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, but visits to Bombay, Calcutta and other parts of northern India are also recorded. In 1870–1871 he is said to have performed the *hajj* and spent some time in the Middle East. Most important, however, were his travels to Ceylon. He is credited with the establishment and renovation of a large number of mosques all over the island. In addition, he initiated many people into the Qâdiriyya, and established meeting places of this brotherhood in

[43] Some authors claim this to be the earliest *madrasa* in Tamil Nadu, cf. Ameer Ali (1989: 104).

[44] Cf. Kokan (1974: 445, 518); the *madrasa* has been named Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya in his honor.

[45] Accounts of his life can be found in Muhammad Nilâm (1963: xix–xli); Kokan (1974: 518–528); Shu‘ayb (1993: 580–604).

[46] I have found no reference to endowments made to the *madrasa*, though Shu‘ayb mentions that the *madrasa* received one rupee per boat touching the port of Galle in Ceylon from the Muslims of that town, cf. Shu‘ayb (1993: 590).

different locations.[47] His own high estimation of Ceylon can be gleaned from his Arabic work *Minhat sarandîb fî madh al-habîb* [*The Gift of Ceylon Consisting in the Praise of the Beloved*], in which praise of the Prophet is interspersed with descriptions of the island.[48] Students from Ceylon also seem to have formed a substantial group among the students of the *madrasa*.

Imâm al-ʻArûs wrote a number of works in both Arabic and Arabic-Tamil, many of which were printed at the lithographic printing press that he had himself set up in Kilakkarai in 1883.[49] Most of his Arabic works are poems in praise of different religious personalities, and some works on *tasawwuf*. More interesting for our purposes are his Tamil works. He composed several Tamil poems, but of greatest impact were a number of prose manuals outlining the basics of Islam according to the Shâfiʻite school of law. Foremost among these are *Fath ad-dayyân fî fiqh khayr al-adyân* [*Opening of the Judge Concerning the Comprehension of the Best of Religions*] and its enlarged version *Maghânî mulah at-tibyân fî sharh maʻânî fath ad-dayyân* [*Abodes of Explanatory Stories concerning the Commentary of the Meanings of* Fath ad-dayyân]. Both manuals were explicitly aimed at the layman who did not have the time or means to study Arabic, but who wanted to lead her/his life in accordance with Islamic principles. The simple prose-style of the books made them easily accessible, and contributed to their growing popularity. *Fath ad-dayyân* continues to be highly valued in Sri Lanka, where an English translation was prepared in 1963,[50] while editions of *Maghânî* in Tamil script are widely available in Muslim bookshops in Tamil Nadu.

When Imâm al-ʻArûs died in 1898, he had left an indelible mark on Islamic literature and education in the Tamil-speaking regions. The Jâmiʻa ʻArûsiyya has continued to influence the development of Islamic

[47] Some of the mosques and *taikkâ*s he is credited to have founded or enlarged in Ceylon are mentioned in Muhammad Nilâm (1963: xxviii); Anonymous (1994: plates 2–9; the plates are not numbered or paginated).

[48] For the content of this work, cf. Shuʻayb (1993: 642–647).

[49] Lists of his works can be found in Muhammad Nilâm (1963: xxiii–xxvii); Shuʻayb (1993: 605–626).

[50] Cf. Imâm al-ʻArûs (1963); this is one of the very few published translations of an Islamic Tamil work that I am aware of. That *Fath ad-dayyân* continues to be popular in Sri Lanka even today is brought out by the reports of the anthropologist Dennis McGilvray, who has repeatedly referred to the work as a 'respected treatise(s)' on Islamic tradition; cf. McGilvray (1998: 468).

educational institutions in the area, especially in Ceylon. Imâm al-‘Arûs himself had been instrumental in the setting up of a number of *madâris* in Ceylon, most notably the Madrasat al-bârî in Weligama in the extreme south of the island. Students from Ceylon continued to flock to the *madrasa*, and many of these students later on founded their own teaching institutions after their return, or served as principals in Ceylonese *madâris*.[51] Yet the developments which reduced Kilakkarai's importance in Islamic education generally also had their impact on the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya. The establishment of *madâris* in remote places of South India and Ceylon reduced the number of students who would have an interest in attending the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya. The rise of the Indian and Sri Lankan nation-states and the civil war in Sri Lanka separated the *madrasa* from its traditional orientation towards the Gulf of Mannar, and reoriented it towards the northern parts of Tamil Nadu and, ultimately, the north Indian Muslim 'mainstream.' Eventually, even the *dars-i nizâmî* was adopted in the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya, marking a further step in the gradual refashioning of a Shâfi‘ite Tamil trajectory in Islamic education towards a model more in line with pan-Indian developments.

Given this impressive history of Islamic education, it may at first seem surprising that another *madrasa*, the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda, was able to draw many more students than the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya since its establishment in 1995.[52] Yet it becomes less surprising if we consider the institutional background of the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda. The *madrasa* was established by the 'Mohamed Sathak Trust,' which was founded in 1973. The trust is run by the Mohamed Sathak Group, a business conglomerate that started as a producer and exporter of agricultural products, especially coffee, but which has diversified and is now engaged in a variety of enterprises ranging from tourism via construction to software development. The trust runs not only the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda, but also eleven other educational institutions in Madras

[51] Further details about many of these *madâris* can be found in Shu‘ayb (1993: 526–534).

[52] The Vice-principal of the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda told me that the *madrasa* had been in existence for about 15 years at the time of my visit in 2003, and had shifted from a location in town to its present site seven years after its establishment (thus around 1995); on the other hand, the website of the Mohamed Sathak Trust claims that the *madrasa* was established in 1995, cf. http://www.sathaktrust.com/syedarab.htm [accessed November 29, 2004]. In any case, the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda is much more recent than the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya.

and Kilakkarai, among them colleges for engineering, the Arts, and various medical disciplines, with almost 7,500 students. As we shall see, the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda is part of this educational conglomerate both physically and institutionally, so that its students can profit to a certain degree from the educational opportunities offered by other colleges funded by the 'Mohamed Sathak Trust.' This may serve to make the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda more attractive for potential students.[53]

Location of the *Madāris*

The Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya is located on West Street, where a small square is formed through the intersection of two streets. The whole western side of the square is dominated by the Usvatun Hasanâ Mosque, recently rebuilt in a kind of neo-Arabic style. The *madrasa* is based in the main building on the southern side of the square. Like the mosque, the *madrasa* was recently reconstructed in a similar style. It is a two-storey building with a central courtyard. Classrooms and the library with a number of old prints and manuscripts are located in this building, as are the graves of Kîlakkarai Taikkâ Sâhib, Imâm al-‘Arûs, as well as a son and a grandson of the latter. The quarters of the students and teachers are located in a separate three-storey building across the square to the south of the mosque.

While the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya is situated well inside Kilakkarai, the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda lies outside the town on East Coast Road, which leads on to the Muslim pilgrimage center of Eruvadi a few kilometres away. Close by are a number of colleges and a polytechnic also maintained by the Mohamed Sathak Trust. The *madrasa* consists of a large two-storey building, which includes classrooms, library and living quarters. This is situated on a spacious estate amongst palmyra and coconut palms.

Syllabus, Degrees and Courses

Both *madâris* follow the Vellore version of the *dars-i nizâmî*, as outlined above. The main course offered in both *madâris*, leading to the degree of 'Mawlawî'/'‘Âlim,'[54] takes seven years to complete. The course starts by teaching the Arabic language, to which are added, from the

[53] Cf. Malikul Azeez (2002); information about the trust's activities can also be gleaned from its website at http://www.sathaktrust.com.
[54] The degree was variously called '‘Âlim,' 'Mawlawî' or even 'Mawlawî-‘Âlim' by my informants and on several websites.

third year onwards, various other subjects like jurisprudence [*fiqh*], Qur'ânic exegesis [*tafsîr*] and *hadîth*. The language classes are completed in the third year, though further subjects continue to be added, like the roots and methods of jurisprudence and *hadîth* [*usûl al-fiqh* and *usûl al-hadîth*], logic and the computation of prayer times [*mîqât*]. But slightly at variance with what I have been told by graduates of the Madrasat bâqiyyât as-sâlihât, Urdu is apparently taught compulsorily in both *madâris*. This may reflect the different geographical setting, as many of the students in northern Tamil Nadu may be already familiar with Urdu when they join the *madrasa*, while the knowledge of that language is less common in the south. I was furthermore told that both Urdu and Tamil books were used in class, though I am not yet sure at what level and for what purpose. The Jâmi'a 'Arûsiyya maintains the tradition of using Arabic-Tamil, and copies of texts like *Maghânî* are loaned to the students, as it is nowadays difficult to obtain editions in Arabic script. The Jâmi'a Sayyid Hamîda kept only editions of this text in Tamil script. English is taught at both *madâris*, as is mathematics[55] [Jâmi'a 'Arûsiyya] and sports [Jâmi'a Sayyid Hamîda]. Apparently, Persian was taught for some time at the Jâmi'a 'Arûsiyya, but at the time that I visited the *madrasa*, this did not any longer seem to be the case.[56]

Examinations at the higher level are usually in Arabic, which is also the language of instruction. At the lower level, students may be asked to translate short passages made up by the teacher from Tamil to Arabic or vice versa, or answer religious questions in Tamil. This also applies for the further degrees offered by the two *madâris*. While the Mawlawî degree can be obtained from any Arabic College in Tamil Nadu, these other degrees are more specific (though not necessarily unique) to the individual *madâris*. They afford us an insight into how the *madâris* have tried to adapt their curriculum to changed circumstances.

The main alternative degree offered at the Jâmi'a Sayyid Hamîda is the degree of 'Afdal al-'ulamâ'.' This degree is offered by several other Arabic Colleges in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. According to Shu'ayb, the

[55] I assume that mathematics here corresponds to the 'secular' subject as it is taught in other schools and colleges in Tamil Nadu, and does not represent the tradition of teaching *riyâdiyyât* in *madâris*. The Principal of the Jâmi'a 'Arûsiyya mentioned mathematics together with English as the subjects which are taught beside the general course of Islamic studies.

[56] Cf. Shu'ayb (1993: 570–571).

University of Madras has been conducting exams for this degree since the 1920s, but I do not have sufficient information about when the degree was first introduced and whether it has undergone any changes since then.[57] The subjects taught are largely similar to those taught for the 'Mawlawî' degree, but the whole course takes only five years. After each year, an examination is conducted by a university to which the college is affiliated. In the case of the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda, the exams are conducted by the Madurai Kamaraj University.[58] The degree is equivalent to a B.A. in Arabic, and allows the student to continue studying for M.A. at a secular university.

Furthermore, the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda offers a course of memorizing the entire Qur'ân, approved by the government and Madurai Kamaraj University. Students who complete this course are given certificates and are awarded the title 'Hâfiz al-qur'ân.'

In contrast to the 'Afdal al-‘ulamâ'' course, the main alternative degree offered by the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya, called '‘Âlim ‘Arûsî,' is unique to this *madrasa*. The course is practically identical to the 'Mawlawî' course, but spread out over eight instead of seven years. This is mainly reflected in the slower pace of the language classes. The course is designed to allow students to attend a secular school or college, parallel to their *madrasa* education. For this reason, classes are held in the morning and evening, before and after school, but full time during the school holidays. The degree was introduced four years ago, and has been further amended in 2002 to enable local students to live with their families rather than insisting on a compulsory stay at the hostel. The *madrasa* is furthermore planning to introduce a computer program.

Even though the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda has not yet introduced any course that may enable its students to acquire a second, secular degree besides the religious one, it has nevertheless recognized the need to provide training in further skills to its students. For this, the college utilizes the nearby secular educational institutions that are run by the

[57] Cf. Shu‘ayb (1993: 557); comparable degrees apparently also exist in Tamil Nadu for students specializing in Persian or Urdu, which are called 'Munshî'-yi fâdil' and 'Adîb-i fâdil' respectively; yet these degrees do not seem to be available in any of the Kilakkarai *madâris*; cf. Ameer Ali (1989: 104).
[58] Other universities involved in conducting examinations for the 'Afdal al-‘ulamâ'' degree that I am aware of include the University of Madras and the University of Calicut.

same trust. Two days a week, the students are attending classes at the Mohamed Sathak Polytechnic, acquiring engineering skills, for which they receive a certificate at the end of their studies. Furthermore, I was told that the trustees were pondering the introduction of a course in Siddha medicine, the indigenous medical system of Tamil Nadu. While the Islamic system of medicine, called 'Yunânî' in Tamil, is generally associated more strongly with Urdu-speaking Muslims in Tamil Nadu, there have been a number of Tamil-speaking Muslims among the exponents of the Siddha system since the late 17th century. Such a course would yet again be an example of the adaptation of specific South Indian elements to *madrasa* education in Tamil Nadu.[59]

Students

Students who enter one of the *madâris* are usually between 13–16 years of age, depending on the course they wish to take. I was told that students at the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya have to be at least 13 years old to take any of the courses offered by this Arabic College, while the age level is apparently a bit higher for the 'Afdal al-‘ulamâ’' course at the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda, and slightly lower for the 'Hâfiz al-qur’ân' classes at the same college. This means that the students have already completed elementary education in school. Prospective students have to pass an entry test, which consists of an examination of the boy's ability to read the Qur’ân and a short paper which tests secular subjects. The subjects examined include Tamil literature, English, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. All the questions are posed in Tamil, except for those in the English section.[60]

Upon joining the *madrasa*, the student is generally required to stay at the *madrasa*'s hostel during his studies. The Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya has, as mentioned earlier, recently decided to allow local students for the '‘Âlim ‘Arûsî' degree to stay with their families. At the time of my visit, this had only been possible for approximately a year, and only six of the 53 students of the *madrasa* made use of it. Lodging, food and medical aid are free of charge in both Arabic colleges, as they are in

[59] I am not sure how far this information relates to the plans by one of the founders of the Mohamed Sathak Trust to set up a medical college for Muslims; cf. Malikul Azeez (2002). For more information on Muslim expounders of the Siddha system of medicine, cf. Venkataraman (1990: 63–65).

[60] A copy of one of these papers was kindly made available to me by the Principal of the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya.

most if not all of the *madâris* in Tamil Nadu. This is an important consideration for students from poorer families, as it allows them to gain access to at least some type of higher education and a degree (which, in the case of the 'Afdal al-‘ulamâ’' degree, would even allow them to continue their studies at a university, provided they could finance this). There indeed seems to be a tendency for the students to come from poorer families. Most of the younger men of Kilakkarai's rich families would rather go to engineering and business schools, often in one of the metropolitan cities like Madras or Bombay, in order to obtain M.E. or M.B.A. degrees. Those whom I had interviewed were generally ignorant of certain features of the *madrasa* system, like the free lodging and medical aid facilities, even though much of the funding that sustains the *madâris* come from their own families. In both colleges, students from different parts of Tamil Nadu studied beside locals. As has been mentioned earlier, many Sri Lankan students used to study in the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya, but recent events, especially the civil war in Sri Lanka, have virtually put an end to this practice.

Regarding the number of students, the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda is the larger of the two *madâris*. In June 2003, there were 60 students studying for the 'Mawlawî' degree, 50 students for the 'Afdal al-‘ulamâ’' degree, and 25 studying for 'Hâfiz al-qur’ân.' At the same time, the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya had 53 students, of which the vast majority, namely 48, were studying for the '‘Âlim ‘Arûsî' degree, while only five students pursued the 'Mawlawî' degree. The Principal of the college admitted that the 'Mawlawî' degree was not very popular with students, even though from a religious point of view it had more prestige than the '‘Âlim ‘Arûsî' degree. This shows that most of the students prefer to attend a course that enables them to obtain a further degree, even if this means more work, rather than limiting their job opportunities to the religious field alone.

Job Opportunities for *Madrasa* Graduates

The job opportunities for *madrasa* graduates in Tamil Nadu indeed look rather bleak. The most commonly available kind of job may be that of *imâm* or *khatîb* [preacher] in a mosque. Yet it should be kept in mind that in some cases, families may claim a hereditary right to occupy these positions in a certain mosque, which may make it difficult for an outsider to gain the job if a member of that family should happen to hold a *madrasa* degree. Other options available include teaching in a *madrasa* or working for an Islamic organization. Government offices

concerned with Islam, such as the 'Tamil Nadu Wakf [sic] Board,' provide further opportunities for jobs. Due to their regional background, though, Tamil Muslims are unlikely to find employment in another state where Urdu-speaking Muslims predominate. A few may be lucky to find employment overseas, to serve as teachers or preachers in mosques and *madâris* serving Tamil-speaking Muslims in the Gulf States or Southeast Asia. But the number of such jobs is severely limited. In many cases, the individuals or organizations funding these jobs may actually prefer to get a graduate of a *madrasa* from their hometown, as it will be easier for them to get information on the candidate and how well he fits in with their ideas and requirements. Otherwise, a graduate from one of the large *madâris* like the Bâqiyyât as-sâlihât may be preferred.

Given this situation, it is no surprise that students actually prefer degrees which increase their opportunities on the job market. Some of the more recent changes in the courses offered by the *madâris*, such as the introduction of the '‘Âlim ‘Arûsî' degree in the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya Arabic College, have been influenced by these very considerations and the fear that students may actually opt for studying in a small engineering college rather than pursuing a religious degree. The *madâris* have thus been forced to adapt their syllabi and degrees in such a way that students are able to participate to a certain extent in secular education beside their religious studies. The pressures of the job market and the competition of secular educational institutions have thus initiated a process of reform well before the media started calling for such reforms in the wake of 9/11.

Funding, Support and Affiliation

A central problem for the *madâris* is to acquire the funds necessary to carry out their activities. Apart from the maintenance of buildings, paying salaries to the teachers and buying books for the library, it should not be forgotten that education is provided free of cost in both *madâris*, as is lodging, food and medical aid. The costs of these are high, and make the proper running of a *madrasa* a costly venture.

Both *madâris* are funded by trusts: the 'Mohamed Sathak Trust' in case of the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda, and the 'Usvatun Hasanâ Muslim Cankam' in case of the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya. Compared with the 'Mohamed Sathak Trust,' the 'Usvatun Hasanâ Muslim Cankam' is smaller, though it is also active in funding educational institutions beside the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya. In 1986, the 'Cankam' ran at least four schools in Kilakkarai:

the Hamîdiyya Primary School, Hamîdiyya Boys Higher Secondary School, Hamîdiyya Girls Higher Secondary School and Hamîdiyya English Medium Matriculation School.[61] As with the 'Mohamed Sathak Trust,' the financial base of the 'Usvatun Hasanâ Muslim Cankam' lies in the business activities of Kilakkarai's merchant families. It should be noted that the 'Mohamed Sathak Trust' is not a religious endowment [*waqf*], but an independent foundation.

Even though not directly related to the mundane concerns of the funding of *madâris*, we have to take a short look at the question of affiliation of the *madâris* to different Islamic schools of thought. In north India, many *madâris* are affiliated to one of various 'paths' [*masâlik*/sg.: *maslak*], such as the Deobandîs, Barelwîs (Ahl-i sunnat wa jamâʻat), Ahl-i hadîth, etc. These *masâlik* seem to be much less prominent in the Tamil-speaking areas than in those where Urdu is spoken, and their names mostly carry little meaning for many laymen. Susan Schomburg reports the use of the term 'Ahl as-sunnat wa al-jamâʻat' by pro-Sufi groups from Kayalpattinam, and some of my Tamil informants identified a tract written in defence of saint-veneration as 'Barelwî.' Yet in both cases there seems to be no evidence of direct links to the followers of Ahmad Ridâ Khân Barelwî (d. 1921) or north Indian Barelwî *madâris*.[62] Similarly, people opposed to *dargâhs* and Sufi brotherhoods are often collectively dubbed as 'Wahhâbîs' by their opponents, as they are in other parts of India. But this is of course meant more as a term of abuse rather than an indicator of membership in a specific religious group.[63] Even the *dars-i nizâmî* was identified with Vellore rather than with Lucknow in the *madâris* that I visited, attesting to a thorough localization of North Indian influences.

This does not mean that there exist no tensions between different interpretations of Islam. Indeed, some questions, especially the subject of saints [*awliyâ'*] and their shrines, can spark heated debates, with the 'frontline' running right through families. But these differences seem much less institutionalised, or rather, much more fragmented.

[61] Cf. Itrîs Maraikkâyar (1986: 45).

[62] Cf. Schomburg (2003: 152).

[63] I have not yet come across any references to Deoband during my visits to Tamil Nadu, though Mattison Mines relates that in some of the northern parts of the state, a *hâfiz* from Deoband may be hired during Ramadân. Cf. Mines (1986: 582); also Anonymous (1994: 12). J.B.P. More similarly reports that the impact of the ideas of Sayyid Ahmad Khân was highly limited in the state; cf. More (2004: 118).

Even groups that propound roughly similar ideas can be fiercely competitive, and there are few terms in use that would provide something like an equivalent to the north Indian *masâlik*.

The dominance of the *dars-i nizâmî* syllabus in Tamil Nadu may actually serve to alleviate these tensions a bit, but this should not be taken to mean that the *madâris* are neutral in these conflicts. This is not the place to investigate the matter thoroughly, but one phenomenon deserves mention here: the close relationship of some *madâris* to Sufi brotherhoods. As has already been said, *tasawwuf* is actually part (if a small one) of the local version of the *dars-i nizâmî* in the form of al-Ghazâlî's *Ihyâ'*. It should further be kept in mind that the founder of the Madrasat bâqiyyât as-sâlihât, Shâh ʻAbd al-Wahhâb, was a Qâdirî *shaykh*. It is not uncommon for *madâris* to be related to certain brotherhoods through their founder. This is the case, for example, with the Fayd al-anwâr Arabic College in Kadayanallur, which is linked to the Shâdhiliyya via its founder.[64] Susan Schomburg reports similar cases from Kayalpattinam.[65] In Kilakkarai, this is obviously the case with the Jâmiʻa ʻArûsiyya, which has a long-standing historical relation to the Qâdiriyya that continues to the present day.[66] Though of course not all *madâris* in Tamil Nadu have connections with brotherhoods, and some are outright hostile to them, these connections are nevertheless an important aspect of the relationship that the *madâris* maintain with the wider Muslim society in Tamil Nadu.

Conclusion

Having outlined both the history of Islamic education in Kilakkarai and the current state of affairs, we may return to assess the influence of different educational models on the development of Islamic education in Kilakkarai. Regarding models derived from north Indian *madrasa* education, it may be said that their impact has been gradual but thorough. Both *madâris* follow the same, basically north Indian-derived syllabus, and the compulsory teaching of Urdu serves to further integrate them into a pan-Indian landscape of Islamic education. While the Vellore version of the *dars-i nizâmî* allows Tamil Muslims to relate more

64 Cf. Satakkattullâh (2000: 242).

65 Cf. Schomburg (2003: 176–180, 190–193).

66 Dr. Shuʻayb, who has acted as managing trustee of the *madrasa*, is also the head of a branch of the Qâdiriyya. Cf. Anonymous (1994: 14, 24).

meaningfully to their north Indian coreligionists, it is also an example of the successful localization of a north Indian tradition in the south. Though it is clearly based on the Lucknow model, it is nevertheless primarily identified with Vellore by many Tamil Muslims, and the addition of works on *tasawwuf* or Shâfi‘ite law has certainly furthered its adoption in many *madâris* in Tamil Nadu. The dominance of the syllabus is rather surprising, given the general ideological fragmentation of Indian Muslims. Indeed, the widespread adoption of the syllabus may have partly averted the development of an educational landscape dominated by *maslak* affiliation, and could actually facilitate future efforts regarding the reform of *madâris*.

But the success of the syllabus should not obscure the fact that it has expanded at the expense of other possible educational trajectories. As its hegemony was already fully established when the Jâmi‘a Sayyid Hamîda was founded, this impact of the Vellore syllabus is only observable when we consider the history of the Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya. Shu‘ayb has lamented that the introduction of the *dars-i nizâmî* led to the elimination of works of local scholarship from the syllabus.[67] Significantly, it may also have had the effect of weakening links with Shâfi‘ite institutions outside India. This becomes most apparent when we consider that al-Azhar University in Cairo, which continues to exert a strong influence in many predominantly Shâfi‘ite countries in Southeast Asia, seems to have played a negligible role in the development of Islamic education in the Shâfi‘ite regions of Tamil Nadu. While it has served to connect Tamil Nadu to the wider Muslim society in India, the *dars-i nizâmî* has thus also played a role in severing the traditional linkages of Tamil Muslim scholarship. The Jâmi‘a ‘Arûsiyya, once an important educational institution, is a clear example of the resulting 'provincialization' of Tamil *madâris*.

In contrast to the gradual process of the introduction of the *dars-i nizâmî*, the impact of secular education on Kilakkarai's *madâris* has been much more visible. Islamic education has come into strong competition with secular education, both for students as well as, to a lesser degree, for funds. As *Madrasa* degrees do not offer graduates a wide range of job opportunities, degrees in subjects like engineering are actually preferred by many Tamil Muslims. Furthermore, even though the financial elite among the Tamil Muslims is still quite active in funding *madâris*, many trusts and individuals are increasingly financing

[67] Cf. Shu‘ayb (1993: 120–121).

institutions of secular education.[68] This has forced *madâris* to react to the dwindling number of students. The introduction of the ''Âlim 'Arûsî' degree in the Jâmi'a 'Arûsiyya is one example of the ways in which *madâris* have tried to cope with the challenge of secular education. Even more intriguing is the case of the Jâmi'a Sayyid Hamîda, which is part of a larger educational conglomerate consisting primarily of secular institutions. This allows for much greater cooperation between *madrasa* and secular colleges, allowing *madrasa* students to profit from the infrastructure of the colleges.

It should be conceded that this model has some inherent dangers. It has been pointed out that the establishment of secular colleges by Muslim trusts has happened at the expense of funding elementary education among the poorer sections of Muslim society. The majority of students in most secular 'Muslim' colleges are Hindus, with the few Muslim students belonging largely to the upper class.[69] Conversely, *madrasa* students tend to be recruited from lower-income families. While cooperation between the colleges and the *madâris* may allow more students from poorer families to obtain certificates in engineering and other subjects, it may also distract from the need to expand educational opportunities among the Muslim lower classes and thus support the rise of a two-class higher educational system, with secular education for the upper classes and *madrasa* education for the lower classes. Nevertheless, such cooperation has substantial positive potential. Apart from widening the knowledge and skills of *madrasa* graduates, it may be a way of integrating Islamic education more thoroughly into the wider educational landscape without compromising on its essentially religious character. Furthermore, as it forces *madrasa* students to interact with non-Muslim students in the 'secular' subjects, it may serve to reduce tensions and prejudices on both sides. In any case, the relatively widespread cooperation between *madâris* and secular educational institutions, also apparent in the case of the 'Afdal al-'ulamâ'' degree, is already an important aspect of Islamic education in Tamil Nadu.

Many of the issues raised in this chapter must be regarded as preliminary, and need further elucidation, such as the details of local elements in the Vellore syllabus and the precise extent of its use in

[68] Shu'ayb even claims that some of these colleges have sprung up by appropriating funds and properties of *madâris*; cf. Shu'ayb (1993: 710–712).
[69] Cf. Ahmed Siraj (2000).

Tamil *madâris*. Yet it should have become clear that the *madâris* in Tamil Nadu were not impervious to change, and have reacted to challenges both from new trends in Islamic education and from non-religious institutions. It is noteworthy that many of these measures were taken to counter dwindling numbers of students rather than to meet the increasing criticism from certain sections of Indian society of *madâris* as breeding grounds for terrorists. Most of the changes in the curriculum mentioned earlier were introduced quite some time before September 11, 2001 and the resulting 'War on Terrorism.' Islamic education in Tamil Nadu, often ignored and disregarded in discussions about the state of Islamic education in India, definitely deserves to be scrutinized more closely in future by both researchers and reformers as contributing towards the integration of Muslim religious education into the frame of education in contemporary India in general.

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Part III

Current Developments

9

The First *Madrasa*: Learned *Mawlawî*s and the Educated Mother

Patricia Jeffery, Roger Jeffery, and Craig Jeffrey[1]

In recent years, some sections of the Indian media have portrayed *madâris* as key sites for the propagation of militantly fundamentalist and masculinist Islam, as implicated in cross-border terrorism and sedition, and as recipients of foreign funding destined for use in anti-national activities. *Mawlawî*s allegedly advocate loyalty to the people of the Islamic creed [*umma*] rather than to the Indian nation-state, and teach inward-looking, intolerant and socially conservative interpretations of Islam.[2] Such stereotypes were brought to life in the film *Kandahar* through the portrayal of strict and humorless *madrasa*

[1] We thank the Economic and Social Research Council [grant number R00238495], the Ford Foundation, and the Royal Geographical Society for funding aspects of the research on which this paper is based, and the Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi, for our attachment there in 2000–2002. We were in Bijnor from October 2000 to April 2001 and again from October 2001 to April 2002. We are grateful to our research assistants, Swaleha Begum, Shaila Rais, Chhaya Sharma and Manjula Sharma, to the people of our research villages (Qaziwala and Nangal Jat), and the schoolteachers, *madrasa* staff and others who so readily answered our questions. Roger Jeffery and Patricia Jeffery did their first research in Bijnor district in 1982–1983, funded by the then Social Science Research Council (now ESRC). Our research in 1990–1991, funded by the Overseas Development Administration, also focussed on Qâzîwâlâ and Nangal Jât. For more on this earlier research, cf. Jeffery (2000, 2001); Jeffery and Jeffery (1994a, 1994b, 1996a, 1996b, 1997, 1999, 2002); Jeffery et al. (1989).

[2] There have been numerous references to *madâris* in English and Hindi newspapers, including *Hindustan Times*, *The Times of India*, *Dainik Jâgaran* and *Amar Ujâlâ*, as well as in journals such as *Organiser* (the RSS English language weekly), *Muslim India* and *Milli Gazette*. For some recent discussions in *Economic and Political Weekly*, cf. W. Ahmad (2000); I. Ahmad (2002); Bandyopadhyay (2002); Engineer (2001); Godbole (2001); Kumar (2000); Sikand (2001).

teachers in Afghanistan, involved in military activity and training pupils in the arts of war.

Little of the published material on Indian *madâris* is supported by ethnographic or statistical data, however, and Indian official statistics rarely disaggregate data by religious community. Thus it is impossible to create an overall picture of the role of *madâris* in Muslim children's education in India.[3] In our recent research on secondary education in Bijnor district (western Uttar Pradesh), we surveyed 20 *madâris* in Bijnor town and in and near our two research villages, and interviewed over 40 'masters' (male teachers of non-Islamic subjects [*mawlawî*s]) and women teachers [*udhtânî*] as well as members of *madrasa* management committees.[4] This chapter draws only on our observations in urban *madâris* in Bijnor and on our interviews with members of management committees and the *mawlawî*s who teach in them, in order to address some general issues within this specific context.[5]

In Bijnor town and its hinterland, the *madâris* mainly teach children under the age of 14, and many of them have more girls than boys enrolled. Some *madâris* (but not all) have classes for older children—mainly boys—and their graduates may continue their studies in institutions such as the *Dâr al-'ulûm* at Deoband.[6] Their atmosphere is peaceful and studious, with a constant hum of children reciting their lessons. We saw no evidence that *madrasa* staff intentionally foster religious intolerance and arrogance. Indeed, *madrasa* staff often comment on the need for religious tolerance and on the variety of legitimate paths to spiritual understanding and morality. The curricula of most *madâris* are indeed dominated by Islamic instruction—recitation of the Qur'ân and some teaching on Islamic practice and morality for the youngest children, but including instruction in Persian, Arabic and other advanced Islamic subjects for the older ones. In addition, though, some *madâris* are recognized by the UP Board of Education to teach Hindi, English, and mathematics. *Madrasa* pupils are involved in

[3] Qamar ad-Dîn (1996) provides useful insights, but is not based on a representative sample of *madâris* in India.

[4] Our research also entailed surveying schools in Bijnor town and its rural hinterland, and interviewing male and female schoolteachers and managers, government officials, local politicians and others involved in education.

[5] For similar material from rural *madâris*, including our interviews with female staff [*udhtânî*], cf. Jeffery et al. (forthcoming-a).

[6] Locally people talk of '*madrasa*' rather than '*maktab*,' even if few of their pupils are studying Arabic and Persian and other advanced Islamic subjects.

patriotic ceremonies on Republic Day and are frequently reminded of their duties and loyalties to their country of birth. On a handful of occasions, we observed brief episodes of corporal punishment (slapping, caning), but most *madrasa* staff consider it cruel and counterproductive, because frightened children cannot learn effectively. Sometimes *madrasa* staff raise their voices to discipline children, but equally we often observed a quiet and mild-mannered masculinity, as in the case of a young *mawlawî* who gently took his colleague's fretting four-year-old son into his lap as we talked. Some *madrasa* staff seem somewhat brusque and dour, but many of our conversations were punctuated with laughter, as when one *mawlawî* delightedly told us about having worked briefly in Surinam where his female pupils had pleaded with him to supplement their study of the Qur'ân with Urdu—so that (he explained after a theatrical pause) they could understand Hindi movies.

Moreover, far from being hermetically sealed streams of formal education, schools and *madâris* display numerous inter-linkages and similarities. Individuals or even entire management committees are sometimes involved simultaneously in managing schools as well as *madâris*. Teachers in these and other schools—government as well as government-aided and private schools managed by Hindus—and *madrasa* teachers display overlapping and parallel educational philosophies, for instance, in their pre-occupation with 'discipline,' in their understandings of how children learn and the need for 'moral education' to be centrally placed in the curriculum. *Madâris* and school pupils alike should practise bodily self-control in the classroom, sitting still and with correct postures, displaying obedience and respect for their instructors, learning their lessons assiduously, and adopting with good grace the superiority of their instructors' linguistic styles and manners. Schools often display a more militaristic tone in their disciplinary regimes than *madâris*, through the physical routines in the daily school assemblies—with children lined up in the school yard, performing exercises to a senior child's shouted instructions and the relentless beat of a huge drum. Further, school and *madrasa* teachers are internally differentiated in similar ways, for instance, in their diverse views on corporal punishment. Some schoolteachers and *madrasa* staff consider the threat of physical punishment the only reliable way of maintaining classroom discipline and ensuring that children study diligently. Equally, others vehemently oppose corporal punishment and consider that pupils' misdemeanors should be dealt with only through verbal chastisement and shaming.

Given the adverse publicity surrounding *madâris* in contemporary India, it is timely to emphasize such parallels. Elsewhere, we have provided a more complex account than the popular stereotypes of *madâris* allow, by locating *madâris* within the overall political economy of educational institutions in western UP.[7] Even before economic liberalization, the state education sector in UP had failed to provide sufficient facilities for the mass of the population, especially for the urban poor and villagers.[8] The gender gap in school attendance, literacy, etc., remains wide.[9] Since the late 1980s, the educational sector has seen rapid 'privatization,' including the increasing residualization of government schooling and the establishment of schools independent of government funding.[10] These processes raise important questions about exclusion and equity within the education sector, let alone more widely. Most Muslims in UP have been poorly served by government schooling—and *madâris* can be seen as a response to this that is more affordable and accessible than many schools. In other words, while outsiders often consider *madâris* simply as *Islamic* institutions, it is vital to see them also as *educational* institutions—which is much closer to their original purposes.

Hence, in this chapter, we emphasize the gender and class projects, which *madâris* share in large measure with other educational institutions, rather than their specifically Islamic aspects. Here we focus on domesticated femininity, an important theme in conversations with *madrasa* staff about girls' education—and a topic that removes us far from the militant and masculine images so rife in popular stereotypes of *madâris*.[11] Most *mawlawî*s in the Bijnor area are connected with the seminary at Deoband, having studied there or in a closely associated *madrasa*, and they continue to visit and be visited by members of the

[7] Cf. Jeffery et al. (2004); Jeffery et al. (forthcoming-a).
[8] Cf. Drèze and Gazdar (1997); Drèze et al. (2001); The Probe Team (1999); Srivastava (2001).
[9] Cf. Karlekar (2000); McDougall (2000); Nayar (2001); Wazir (2000).
[10] Cf. Jeffery et al. (forthcoming-b). The UP government nevertheless retains powers over schools that it does not fund, through the process of granting 'recognition' to schools that wish to pursue the 'UP Board of Education' syllabus (an important consideration for schools wanting to attract pupils). Moves to exercise control over (but not fund) *madâris* reflect a political agenda, rather than an (ostensible) concern with educational standards.
[11] We intend to pursue the issue of mental versus manual labor and genteel masculinity elsewhere.

current teaching staff. Their views on reform and individual improvement through education reflect this background. The *mawlawî*s and *madrasa* managers we met generally agree on the purpose of educating girls: to be more competent wives, mothers and domestic managers, who can continue the 'civilizing mission' in the home. An apparently uniform exposure to a particular strand of theological interpretation has not, however, resulted in a uniformity of opinion on what Islam specifies about girls' education. The urban *mawlawî*s often express diverse and vehement views on the appropriate content and quantity of education that girls need. Whilst a few consider very modest levels of education to suffice, most are keen to see girls receiving formal schooling even after adolescence. From a rather different angle, though, stripping away the explicitly Islamic aspects of the *mawlawî*s' views on girls' education exposes parallels with the rationales of local Hindu and Muslim schoolteachers, who likewise emphasize the importance of educated mothers in extending the teacher's 'civilizing' role into the home.

To this common perspective on gender issues, we must add class and urban snobberies. Urban *mawlawî*s and *madrasa* managers—who are generally not from the wealthiest backgrounds—frequently emphasize that education has placed them on a different plane from most people around them. They distance themselves from the uncouth and the illiterate, appearing over-anxious to claim cultural distinction—superior manners and speech—from those who are perhaps too close to their own origins for comfort. Time and again, *mawlawî*s and schoolteachers alike verbalized pride in the teacher's civilizing role and echoed the views of middle-class urbanites about villagers and the urban poor. We should, then, locate *madâris* within a broad range of institutions (educational as well as social work and other 'uplift' organizations) that have similar projects framed within a conservative view of gender politics and the need for reform at the individual and household level. This is a gendered and urban-based class agenda, in which education takes pride of place as an instrument of progress and social transformation—a 'civilizing mission' in which schoolteachers and *mawlawî*s play central roles, along with educated women in the home.

Contested Views of Girls' Education

One morning, a young man dallying by the roadside offered to escort Patricia and our Muslim research assistant to a *madrasa* that we were

having trouble locating in one of Bijnor's central housing colonies. He stayed on after we settled ourselves on the *dhurries* to talk to Husn ad-Dîn and Khalîl, two *mawlawî*s in their 20s who taught there.[12] At one point in the conversation, Patricia asked if any female pupils were doing *hifz* [committing the Qur'ân to memory]. Husn ad-Dîn explained that four of the older girls were in the *hâfiza* class taught by Khalîl's father, who had founded the *madrasa*. Our escort intervened animatedly to say that girls *can* do *hâfiza* but that it is useless [*be-kâr*] for them to do so. Patricia asked why, and he said, 'Women cannot stand up in a mosque and recite the *Qur'ân-i sharîf* to other people. They also cannot recite *tarâwîh* [prayer comprising portions of the Qur'ân recited during the month of Ramadan]. That is why it is useless for them to do *hâfiza*.' At this Husn ad-Dîn retorted, 'It is useless to say that it is useless to teach girls *hâfiza*! What sort of things are you saying? The meaning of *hâfiz* is not that you have to recite in some *madrasa* or mosque. You tell me, do all the people doing *hâfiza* recite *tarâwîh* or *Qur'ân-i sharîf* in a mosque?' Khalîl—whose three sisters are all *Hâfiz-i qur'ân*—chipped in to agree with Husn ad-Dîn. The young man who had guided us to the *madrasa* was firm, however: 'Indeed they do not all recite in a mosque. But even so it is useless for girls to do *hâfiza*.' Husn ad-Dîn responded by saying, 'If there is one person in a family, whether a boy or a girl, who has done *hâfiza*, then the sins of 10 generations of that family's ancestors will be forgiven. So now you tell me if it is useless for girls to do *hâfiza*. It is not essential that a girl who has done *hâfiza* must stand up in a mosque and recite the *Qur'ân-i sharîf*. This is education [*ta'lîm*] and if the whole *Qur'ân-i sharîf* is in someone's heart, what better thing than that is there? You should absolutely not say that it is useless for girls to do *hâfiza*. When this thing is written nowhere in the *Qur'ân-i sharîf*, how can you say such a thing?' The young man said that it is useless precisely because a girl cannot recite the *Qur'ân-i sharîf* in a mosque. By this stage, Husn ad-Dîn was becoming very heated and he shouted at the young man, 'Why are you calling this useless? He who calls it useless after I have explained it is himself useless! Studying [*parhâ'î*] is a very good thing and no matter how much someone studies it is too little. And girls, too, should be taught as much as boys. You are making everything useless.'

[12] All interviews were conducted in Urdu and the research assistant took detailed notes at the time, which were subsequently written up and translated into English. All names here are pseudonyms.

Khalîl joined in: *'Parhâ'î* is not useless. And if girls do *hâfiza*, that is a very good thing. How can you say that it is useless? In Islam, it is considered important to educate women. Just look at Hadrat Ruqayya[13] and how learned she was. And women are absolved from several prayers each month. That shows how Almighty God treats women with such consideration.'[14]

Like the young man who challenged Husn ad-Dîn and Khalîl, a few of the urban *mawlawî*s felt that girls need only a little basic instruction in religious matters at a school or *madrasa*. Any more would be redundant, because girls are destined for marriage, motherhood and domesticity. As one put it, 'Girls should be taught, but according to what is necessary [*darûrat ke mutâbiq*], just so much that they know the difference between what is forbidden [*harâm*] and what is permitted [*halâl*].'

*Mawlawî*s taking this line argued that sufficient religious knowledge and modest competence in religious practice can be attained in just a few years. Once girls reach puberty, they can properly be withdrawn from school to spend the time until marriage learning domestic skills from their female relatives. This will suffice to ensure their satisfactory transition to adulthood. From this stance, the cessation of girls' schooling at this stage is appropriate and even demanded by Islam, and it averts the serious dangers that arise from schooling adolescent boys and girls side by side. For instance, one *mawlawî* told us that girls stop attending the Bijnor *madrasa* where he teaches once they reach the age of 12 or so. We asked if parents stopped sending them or the *madrasa* did not permit them to attend. He replied, 'Religion forbids it, because in our religion girls do not wander around outside meeting strange men. But there is also something from the parents' side because they do not want their big girls to go into mosques and *madâris*.'

[13] Ruqayya was a daughter of the Prophet Muhammad and his wife Khadîja. Her second husband was the later caliph 'Uthmân b. 'Affân. She died, however, while the Prophet was absent from Medina during the expedition to Badr in 624 AD.
[14] He did not openly specify why women are absolved from praying, but this relates to menstruation. He interprets this as a reflection of God's kindness to women—although the notion that menstrual blood is profoundly polluting can be read as a disparaging view of women's biological functions.

The Virtues of Educating Girls

These presumptions about women's position in their families were no different from those voiced on numerous occasions by village parents—and by the majority of *mawlawî*s, who held quite different views on the *extent* and *content* of the formal education required by girls. Indeed, most of the *mawlawî*s lamented the sudden and premature curtailment of girls' schooling once they had become mature [*sayânî, bâligh*] and considered that girls simply could not have had enough schooling by that stage for the successful fulfillment of their adult duties.

Several *mawlawî*s elaborated their views by referring to the different natures [*fitrat*] that Allah has given girls and boys. There are natural differences between boys and girls that put girls at an advantage with respect to education: girls are more intelligent, they grasp new skills more rapidly and they are also more enthusiastic about their studies. Equally, the different social locations of girls and boys mean that girls are less easily distracted.[15] One *mawlawî* said that in the Qur'ân, God has given girls a higher status [*darja*] than boys: 'He has made girls' hearts more loyal [*wafâdâr*] than men's. There is more love in their hearts than in men's hearts.' He said that women are more conscientious [*îmândâr*] than men and that *'Allâhu ta'âlâ* has commanded that if there is no woman then there will be no love-affection or anything else, because women alone teach people how to love, not men.' Like several other *mawlawî*s, he talked in terms of girls' being more enthusiastic [*shawqîn*] and having an eagerness to study [*parhâ'î kâ shawq*] while 'boys simply play around hither and thither' and do not want to study. Several *mawlawî*s stressed that girls spend a lot of their time inside their homes, while boys, by contrast, are 'outside things' and get engrossed in playing or in learning some trade. In all sorts of ways, indeed, several *mawlawî*s considered girls to be better pupils:

> Yes, that's right. Girls do study with more enthusiasm than boys. They get higher *numbers* [grades] than boys. Boys don't spend much time in studying. They spend more of their time playing.
>
> Part of the reason [why there are few educated boys in his locality] is that boys do not study much because they are

[15] The schoolteachers we interviewed expressed similar views on gender differences.

> earning. Girls remain in the house and they don't have worries about earning money. That is why they study.

Most *mawlawî*s not only felt that girls are naturally adept and highly motivated students, but that Islam specifies that girls should be educated at least as much as boys. Indeed, just as the *mawlawî*s opposed to lengthy schooling for girls used Islam to justify their position, those who advocated girls' schooling asserted that Islam demands it. One urban *mawlawî* insisted that it is a religious duty [*fard*] in Islam to complete the education of women and men alike. Another talked with great feeling about how important girls' education is in Islam:

> Yes, boys and girls should be educated absolutely the same. In twenty-six *sipâras* of the *Qur'ân-i sharîf*, God has told us that the education for women and men is to be equal and that it is absolutely essential. And our *Hudûr* [i.e. the Prophet Muhammad] has also said that even if we have to go to China—even if we have to go on foot—to obtain whatever sort of education, then we should go, whether we are a man or a woman. [...] But why should women remain behind in this race for change [*badlaw kâ dawr*] when the religion is giving permission? It is in the religion that if girls have to study alongside boys in order to find *ta'lîm*, then they should still study. In Islam it is forbidden to take alcohol and it is a sin. But when you are ill, if whatever medicine you are taking contains alcohol, then that is not forbidden by the religion, because it is a medicine to make your health right. *Ta'lîm* is like that. *Ta'lîm* is a religious duty for every man and woman in our religion and so we should make education complete in whatever way possible. I ask you, in what religion and in what book is it written that girls should not be educated much? I say that it is a religious duty for girls to study, but it is only recommended [*sunnat*] for boys, because a boy's education benefits him alone and a girl's education benefits everyone in the house.

Several *mawlawî*s centered the significance of girls' education on their adult roles. Girls, they emphasized, will soon be married and bearing children. Like teachers in educational institutions, girls will soon be involved in producing human beings—but ill-educated and ignorant women cannot be satisfactory mothers or produce *civilized*

human beings. Girls, then, must be properly educated so that they use their immense influence well and can perform their absolutely vital duties for their families. Another *madrasa* manager, for instance, argued strenuously that women have been given high status in Islam and this is evidenced in several ways, including the importance that is attached to their domestic roles:

> Men go out for *jihâd* and they fight, but God gives women religious reward for struggling [*jihâd kâ thawâb*] for remaining only in the house. They bring up children and they serve [*khidmat*] them all day long and they guard their husband's wealth and honor [*mâl awr ‘izzat kî hifâzat*]. This is *jihâd* in the house. Hadrat ‘Â’isha complained to *Hudûr* [i.e. the Prophet Muhammad], 'Men go out for *jihâd* but we women stay in the house and do not get any free time at all from doing the work for the children.' So he said, 'You women perform a huge *jihâd* in the house itself and you don't need to go anywhere at all to get rewarded.' [...] Women are the rulers. Everything is under women's control [*‘awrat ke hâth men*]. If a woman wishes, she can make everything improve [*sudhâr saktî he*]. And if a woman wishes, she can also ruin everything [*bigâr bhî saktî he*]. God has put nothing under men's control. All the capability and strength [*tâqat*] have been given into women's hands.

Again, when we asked another *mawlawî* if girls and boys should be educated in like manner, he said that they should:

> They should get equal *parhâ’î*. There should be just this much difference, that alongside the *parhâ’î* boys should be taught some *kâm* [work or practical skill] for then they will be able to do some other work if they cannot obtain service [*nawkarî*]. There is no need to teach girls *kâm*. For them, *parhâ’î* is enough. But it is absolutely essential to teach girls discretion and refinement [*tamîz-tahdhîb*], because they alone make or destroy a home. Everything is under the woman's control. Women live inside the house and they are knowledgeable [*wâqif*] about everyone's characters. The man stays outside. And he also does not pay very much attention to his home. He is occupied with earning. An educated and well-mannered girl [*parhî-likhî awr tamîz-tahdhîb-walî larkî*] will certainly run the house in her own way, but

> paying attention to the character and wishes of every person in the house. That is why it is very important to educate girls.

In this vision, then, the work a married woman does in the home is highly valued. Her capacity to maintain or enhance the standing of her husband's family in the locality is crucial. So, too, is the possibility that she might bring the whole edifice of honor [*'izzat*] crashing down. A woman has the power to destroy as well as to create—and the educated woman will understand what is at stake and how to protect and improve her husband's reputation. An educated woman knows the difference between respectable behavior and behavior that would bring her household into disrepute. She will be expert in household management, frugal and careful in her budgeting, and constantly mindful of her own demeanor and of her generosity in dealings with others. Central to this perspective are the woman's activities as mother, rearing her children, instructing them in correct behavior, informing them about religion and manners, disciplining unacceptable traits and encouraging courtesies in behavior and speech that will reflect well on her and her husband's household. It is her duty to ensure that her children are brought up in a good *mâ-hawl* [ambience, atmosphere, environment]. The trope of mother-as-teacher echoes through our conversations with *mawlawî*s and it is in this sense that they often commented that 'the mother's lap is the first *madrasa*.'[16]

One *mawlawî* responded to our comment that some people had told us that there was no point in teaching girls *hifz al-qur'ân* by saying: 'Even if she does not use the knowledge outside, it will be useful inside the home.' And when we told him that villagers often complain that sending children to school is pointless because it does not ensure that they obtain 'service,' he was adamant:

> It is not necessary to study solely in order to obtain 'service.' Education [*ta'lîm*] is essential. And it is absolutely essential for a girl because she is going to have to run a home. She will rear her children in her lap [*god*]. Children are a flower. Their supervision and care [*dekh-bhâl*] is the woman's work. If a girl is educated, then she can care for this flower.

[16] Hindu schoolteachers made similar comments about the mother's lap being the first school or even university, but Muslims suggest this saying is derived from a *hadîth* of the Prophet.

He even emphasized the mother's responsibility for educating children over and above that of the teacher and said that girls should be *more* educated than boys:

> The greater responsibility ought to be the mother's, because the mother spends more time in the home with the children. And children are more open with their mother. If they don't understand something, they will ask her without any timidity [*jhijhak*]. [...] Women run the house and they teach children discretion and refinement [*tamîz-tahdhîb*]. The wife is a *madrasa*. Just as all things are taught in a *madrasa*, in the same way the wife teaches everything to the children in the house. Children's education begins in the mother's lap. The man does not spend the entire day in the house. It is up to the mother to pay attention to everything.

To emphasize this point, several *mawlawî*s pointed to problems within their own families. One, for example, said:

> Girls' education is absolutely essential, because tomorrow girls will teach their own children in their homes. The man goes out of the house to do his work and the woman remains in the house. The woman pays more attention to the children. If she is educated, then she will teach her own children. My own wife is not educated. I taught her to read the *Qur'ân-i sharîf* after we were married. So now I am educating my children by hiring tutors. But if my wife were educated, she would teach them herself. I myself am involved in my work from morning to evening.

Similarly, another lamented that his wife was not educated enough to supervise the children's schoolwork:

> Girls' education is very essential, because they themselves are a *madrasa* or school, because a young child's very first class begins in that very *madrasa*. Whatever she teaches a child, it will learn. I think that if a girl is educated, then her children will certainly be educated. And there is a lot of benefit from girls' education, for if she herself has studied, then the children will also certainly study of their own accord. Now you take my wife. She is 8th pass. If she were more educated, I would not need to get tuition for my children. So there is a great deal of benefit from girls' education.

Others argued that educating a girl has a more far-reaching impact than educating a boy, saying, for instance:

> If a boy studies, then only one person in the house learns. And if a girl studies, then the whole household [*khândân*] learns. A man mostly stays outside the house and a woman inside. She looks more to the children. If she is educated she will teach everyone.

Another based his argument for educating girls both in Islam and in women's domestic roles:

> It is absolutely essential to educate girls, because it is in the *hadîth* that 'the very best place of learning is the mother's lap' [*awwalîn darsgâh mâ kî god hotî he*]. One woman educates a whole family [*khândân*]. Because other *madâris* don't pay so much attention to girls' education, I go to such *madâris* and tell them that if they get one girl to memorize one word, then they should understand that they have caused the whole *khândân* to remember that word. For a girl takes the full benefit of her education. If she is educated in even one word, then she will make the effort to teach that word to someone else so that they will know it too. That is why it is very essential to educate girls. And in our religion, too, boys' and girls' education is on par [*barâbar*]. That's why it's even *more* essential to educate girls, because girls' education is not forbidden in Islam. [...] In my own opinion there should not be any difference in the education of boys and girls, because education is essential [*darûrî*] for them both. And it will come in useful to them all, according to their own reckoning [*apne apne hisâb se*]. A girl's education comes in useful inside the house. And boys are mostly outside and education is essential for that. [...] Education is a duty [*fard*] for every man and woman. Yet I say this: that girls' education is absolutely essential [*bahut-hî darûrî*], because the girl runs the house and she brings up the children. She alone teaches them good things, not the father.

Most of our discussions with the *mawlawî*s revolved around assumptions that adult women would be based in their homes. Girls' education is primarily justified in terms of ensuring that women can fulfill their domestic duties, creating suitable environments in the home

in which to care for their children, providing them with at least the basics of instruction in Islamic doctrine and etiquette, and even guiding them as they proceed through formal schooling. By and large, *mawlawî*s do not visualize that educated women will directly play a significant role in the world beyond their homes, although teaching—for instance, in a girls' *madrasa* or school—was usually deemed acceptable, provided that domestic duties are not neglected and that the workplace maintains proper segregation of girls from boys. For the most part, though, women would be working behind the scenes on tasks of the utmost importance and whose implications would reverberate widely.

Constraints on Girls' Education

According to the Bijnor *mawlawî*s, though, there is a snag: most Muslim women currently lack knowledge of the requirements of Islam, are unable to maintain their homes properly and honorably, do not understand of the principles of child-rearing and cannot help and encourage their children with their school work. In rural areas, leaving formal education in a *madrasa* generally amounts to the cessation of any kind of study. Few villages have schools—whether government or private—with secondary classes, and few Muslim girls travel to another village or town for further studies. Neither the neighborhood nor the home are repositories of civilization and urbanity. Rural mothers themselves are poorly educated, or may never have attended an educational institution at all, so they cannot provide an educational ambience [*parhâ'î kâ mâ-hawl*]. Because they themselves are illiterate or unlettered [*jâhil, an-parh*], they have neither the knowledge [*jânkârî*] nor the cultivation and refinements [*adâb*] to prepare their children properly for adult life. Moreover, rural livelihoods often entail considerable inputs into animal care and other home-based activities that curtail the time a girl could expect to spend studying. In urban areas, by contrast, some women run small classes at home (in which they generally teach reading the Qur'ân and possibly Urdu to the girls in their charge), and single-sex schools at secondary level are much more accessible geographically (if not financially). Several urban *mawlawî*s pointed out that higher urban female literacy rates also enable some girls to be taught at home by female relatives or neighbors after leaving formal education (or in order to supplement their continuing formal education in school). On the other hand, though, urban

madrasa pupils come disproportionately from very poor backgrounds, where few female relatives are likely to be literate. Overall, then, girls whose formal education is suddenly curtailed when they reach puberty are unlikely to continue studying thereafter.

The urban *mawlawî*s consider themselves duty bound to take on the burden of producing Muslims who are properly equipped both for the next life and for life in this world, because they are familiar with religious practice and with the requirements of refinement, honor, decency and cleanliness that demarcate the ignorant and unclean from the refined person. They feel that educating children is too important to be delegated to illiterate and incompetent parents, and that they themselves are strategically positioned to remedy this sorry state of affairs. They (and perhaps only they) can intervene in the reproduction of the Muslim community by providing the girls in their charge with the competence to improve the ambience [*mâ-hawl*] of their homes.

A key issue, as far as *mawlawî*s are concerned, is that children learn so much by observing and imitating what they see around them.[17] The *mâ-hawl* in which children are brought up—amongst adults and other children who do not embody the refinements that education provides—gives them little chance to observe behavior that *mawlawî*s deem acceptable and appropriate. Left to the devices of their parents and neighbors, such children will absorb the wrong sorts of things and will fail to imbibe the correct ones. As one *mawlawî* put it:

> The house and the surrounding environment have a great deal of effect [*athar*] on a child. Small children absorb a lot of influences. No matter how much discernment [*tamîz*] you have, if the neighboring children are bad, then your child will play with them and will certainly become misbehaved [*be-tamîz*].

Another emphasized the impact that the environment can have on small children by telling us about his younger daughter (aged about six). Just a few days earlier, he was away on some work for his *madrasa*. On returning, he learnt that she had not done her studies but had spent the day playing with a girl in a nearby house:

[17] Children's malleability (of mind and body) and the influence of the *mâ-hawl* on their overall development was an important theme in our interviews with schoolteachers as well as *madrasa* teachers, and we intend to explore this in more detail elsewhere.

> When she came back in the evening, I told her off for not doing her studying and I also smacked her. Straight away she swore at me. So I asked my wife where the girl had been all day and she told me that she had been in the neighborhood. So you can see how much difference can result from just one day. If she had been in Qâzîpara [a locality in Bijnor town], in place of abusive language [*gâlî*], she would have learnt *alif-be-te* [the first three letters of the Urdu alphabet]. So the home environment has an effect and so does that of the neighborhood. The *mâ-hawl* in Qâzîpara is the best in Bijnor and that is because everyone there is discerning [*samajhdâr*] and educated. People there are busy with their own work and they don't interfere or talk about other people's business. Even an illiterate [*jâhil*] boy from Qâzîpara seems like an educated one, because he's living beside educated people and so he learns how to wear clothes and to talk to people properly. And in Mirdhagân and Châhshîrî [two other neighborhoods in Bijnor], even an educated boy will seem ignorant [*jâhil*] because he's living in the midst of *jâhil* people.

Children absorb things from their home environment that they repeat when they attend the *madrasa*, maybe obscenities that they overhear in their homes or the lewd lyrics of film songs on television. As one *mawlawî* put it, 'These days children are watching TV and they are learning dirty habits. In giving voice to dirty songs they don't learn good things. We can keep control within the *madrasa* but not in their homes and outside.' And if parents themselves are not educated, they simply cannot provide the kind of *mâ-hawl* within their homes that might combat the bad influences so prevalent in the world beyond. Several *mawlawî*s considered that the gulf between what is acceptable in a *madrasa* and what passes without censure at home is much wider in the rural areas than in towns. As one *mawlawî* put it:

> People in villages even say '*tû*' [the least respectful form of you] to their elders. But people in towns do not speak like that. They speak with good manners [*tamîz se*]. [...] It is not as difficult for me to teach the children here [in Bijnor] as it is in the villages because there is not so much difference between the *mâ-hawl* of the school and the *mâ-hawl* of the home.

Educating Parents

*Mawlawî*s often expressed with considerable vehemence and exasperation their disdain for uneducated parents, and especially for villagers and their lifestyles. They often portrayed themselves as seriously at odds with their pupils' parents. In part, this is reflected in the numerous adverse comments on the manners, speech and knowledge of Islam of the uneducated. Beyond this, though, parents' own lack of education means (according to the *mawlawî*s) that they are not even aware of their own inadequacies and uncouthness—and this impacts on their approach to their children's development.[18] For *mawlawî*s, perhaps even more challenging than rectifying children's manners and speech through instruction and example is persuading parents to appreciate the importance of education. As they see it, the major obstacle to ensuring that girls continue with their studies after puberty is that many uneducated parents do not have enough enthusiasm for education [*parhâ'î kâ shawq*]. Ignorant parents are liable to question the purpose and value of education, whether for girls or for boys. They may even be opposed to it. Villagers might say that there is no point in educating their sons if they cannot obtain employment afterwards, but one *mawlawî* asserted:

> You don't do *parhâ'î* in order to get a job, because from education you learn the correct way to live [*jîne kâ tarîqa*], you learn discernment [*tamîz*]. There is more benefit from education than there is from a job, if you think about it. I spend two hours every day alerting people [*logon kâ zihn banânâ*] in the neighborhood to education. I tell them that the purpose of education is not only to be able to earn. It is something other than that. Education is essential in the same way as eating and drinking.

Sometimes villagers claim that children become physically weak by spending time studying and that they become incapable of doing heavy manual labor. But *mawlawî*s often emphasized the strength that comes from literacy:

[18] We should stress here, however, that this view is not altogether endorsed by our interviews with villagers in Qâzîwâlâ and Nangal Jât, where self-effacing discourses about their inferiority in comparison with educated people were prevalent.

> There is a difference for one who is studying. But even if their body becomes weak their mind becomes very sharp, because all the strength in their body-heart-mind comes into their pen and their *jîbh* [tongue or pen-nib]. In the face of the strength of the pen and *jîbh*, all other strengths are useless and weak. The strength of the pen is greatest of all, because learning is enlightenment [*rawshanî*] and the uneducated person is like a blank wall. There is nothing that has more strength, wealth, honor and fame than learning. Someone who is educated possesses all these things. And one who is uneducated does not have any of them. Then such a man can only do pointless work [*ghâs khâtnâ*; lit.: cutting grass]. He is not capable of controlling a pen.

When we put it to him that villagers sometimes say that educated girls become arrogant, he was adamant that such claims were founded on a misunderstanding of what education does to people:

> They are saying incorrect things. An educated girl simply cannot be arrogant [*ghamandî*] for she knows learning. And no learning and no religions teach people to be arrogant. Those who are ignorant [*jâhil*], they alone will say that an educated girl is arrogant because they themselves are not educated. Villagers or people who are ignorant think such girls are arrogant because their styles of speaking, living and dressing are different. An educated girl will talk with '*âp-janâb*' [i.e. using a respectful form of address] and the ignorant person will say '*tu-tarâk*' [i.e. rudely, using a disrespectful form of address]. So when an ignorant person hears her speaking, he will consider that she is putting on airs. And an educated girl has a different method of working. She does everything with cleanliness [*safâ'î se*] and having thought about it first. For example, when she is cleaning the house, she will think about which things look good where, and she will think that the food should be cooked with cleanliness. Without education, she would not pay attention to all those things. But they have been placed inside her as a result of education. So all these things come from education. And when an educated girl pays attention to these things, it seems to someone who is ignorant that she is putting on airs and that she is arrogant.

This theme of *jâhil* or illiterate villagers incapable of understanding the benefits of education came up again and again in our conversations

with urban *mawlawî*s. Without education, people may not even understand how much they have lost out. Someone once asked a *mawlawî*, sceptically, 'What is the benefit of education?' The *mawlawî* replied:

> I explained in terms that he would understand. I told him that if he was travelling somewhere and he was educated, he could read for himself where the bus was going. And in the same way, if there was a signboard above a shop with writing on it, then he could read it and find out what was written on it. I told him that with education a human being is made, and without education a person remains like an animal. I constantly try to prepare people's minds for education and I've had some success [*kâm-yâbî*] in this. [...] *Parhâ'î* is a very good thing, because with studying, people learn the skills for living in religion and in this world [*dîn-dunyâ ke salîqe*].

Parental resistance to girls' schooling, their insistence that educating girls beyond puberty was pointless, parents' ignorance and their failure to appreciate the importance of educating girls were repeatedly alleged in the *madâris* we visited. One man's outspoken comments epitomize the frustrations that several other *mawlawî*s voiced:

> Villagers say useless things. They are living in the new era and they are saying things that come from the old one. They use tractors and ploughs, electricity and oil. They go in trains and buses. These are all things from the new era. This is a new era in which the whole world has become one because of the telephone. Today you can talk to anyone in America, England, London, anywhere at all. How great a change is this? And this change has been brought about by human beings alone. People take all these new things. They take everything from these times, except one thing: they do not think about girls. They think that girls should not study in the way that boys do. [...] Some people say that girls are ruined by going out. But this is completely wrong because it is a matter of the girl's own good sense [*samajhdârî*] which things she takes inside herself from the *mâhawl* in which she is living. There are also those girls who go wrong 'behind four walls' [*châr dîwâron men*]. And girls who go outside do not go wrong—they progress, because outside they meet good and bad and all kinds of people, so they also learn

> about good things and about bad things. And it is a matter of the girl's *samajhdârî* what she sees and what changes she takes inside herself. I have generally seen that a bad girl becomes good as a result of going to school and meeting people. She understands whether she benefits from bad things or from good ones.

Segregation and Discernment

How can *mawlawî*s encourage parents to prolong their daughters' education sufficiently to satisfy the aims of the *mawlawî*s themselves? *Mawlawî*s feel they face an uphill task just in convincing village parents of the importance of educating their adolescent daughters. Nevertheless, their arguments might be more persuasive with parents if *madâris* can guarantee the right kind of learning environment. Some *mawlawî*s know that others would not agree with their views on co-education:

> I do not think that it is bad for girls and boys to study together. Educated boys and girls alike are discerning [*samajhdâr*]. They know good and bad and they understand them. And I say this: girls who go to school are very *samajhdâr* because 'when a watermelon sees another watermelon it changes colour' [*kharbûza kharbûze ko dekhkar rang badaltâ he*]. If there are ten girls in one class who are badly behaved [*bad-chhalan*] and in that same class there are five who are *samajhdâr*, then those five will make the other ten *samajhdâr.* When those ten see that the others are correct with respect to both religion and the world [*sahîh dîn awr dunyâ donon tarha se*], they themselves will change of their own accord [*khud-ba-khud apne âp*]. So I don't think that it is bad for girls and boys to study together. But the *mâ-hawl* here at present is not like that. And that is why people here take objection [*i'tirâd*].[19]

Like other *mawlawî*s who consider lengthy education for girls to be crucial, this *mawlawî* recognizes that *madâris* need to accommodate parental prejudices if they want increasing numbers of girls to continue

[19] Here the *mawlawî* is using '*samajhdâr*' in a positive sense. In the villages, people often used it in a pejorative sense of being excessively knowing, for instance about sexuality, especially at too early an age.

in education after puberty. Unlike him, though, most *mawlawî*s both conform with and are ready to accommodate parental views on co-education. If space for separate classrooms is lacking, co-education for small children is generally considered acceptable, if not entirely desirable. As adolescence approaches, however, co-education becomes very problematic, as does the teaching of teenage girls by male staff. Parents need to be assured that *parda* will be maintained and threats to their daughters' honor [*'izzat*] and marriage hopes held at bay. *Madâris* cannot change the ambience of street culture, at least not in the short run, and parents often regard the journey between home and *madrasa* as a source of danger. But even providing a safe haven within the *madrasa* for female pupils entails providing secure and separate instruction for girls, preferably with an exclusively female teaching staff, and an organization of space and classrooms that achieves acceptable degrees of segregation—of female pupils from male teachers (especially young ones), of female and male staff, and of male and female pupils. Sometimes, established *madâris* organize parallel facilities for girls and boys; in other cases single-sex *madâris* are established, some with boarding accommodation that removes the need for adolescent girls to be exposed to the world outside the *madrasa*.[20]

Often, however, the organizational headaches and financial implications of making such adjustments prove too great a challenge. Most *madâris* are poor in resources and reliant on variable and unpredictable incomes from subscriptions [*chhandâ*] and donations.[21] Most do not charge fees, so increasing pupil numbers increases outlays, not income. Few *madâris* can afford to improve their teachings materials and facilities. Nor can they easily employ staff on attractive salaries and conditions. In any case, the recruitment and retention of any female staff with adequate qualifications is compromised by low levels of female education and by adult women's difficulties in traveling alone to their workplaces (especially rural ones). There is, then, often a mismatch between the *mawlawî*s' rhetoric about the importance of girls' education on the one hand and parental anxieties and the organizational capacity of *madâris* on the other.

[20] For more on these issues, cf. Jeffery et al. (forthcoming-a).
[21] Cf. ibid.

Girls in the Civilizing Mission

Despite contested interpretations of what Islam implies for girls' education, the Bijnor *mawlawî*s generally argued that—as future mothers —girls should be enabled to become competent 'first *madâris*' for their children and play an effective role in disseminating knowledge about Islamic doctrine and practice, about decent well-mannered behavior, and about discretion and refinement [*tamîz-tahdhîb*]. Most *mawlawî*s consider that the continuation of girls' education beyond puberty is crucial to achieving this end—and to their chagrin, too few parents permit their daughters to continue long enough (as they see it) to absorb the necessary competences. And even parents who are keen to see their daughters studying are themselves unlikely to be capable of supervising and encouraging their schoolwork. For *mawlawî*s, this places on them the responsibility to further their 'civilizing mission' through their female pupils.[22]

For the most part, then, the Bijnor *mawlawî*s are very far from hostile to girls' education, which might suggest a departure from popular stereotypes. But while girls are often considered to have superior natural aptitudes for studying, their education should primarily train them to be better wives and mothers than they currently are. Marriage, motherhood and domesticity are still central in girls' destinies, and girls' education should not serve to overturn gender politics at the domestic level. Moreover, although some *mawlawî*s are open to the possibility that some girls might become teachers in local *madâris*, such employment is a means of benefitting the 'civilizing mission,' not of providing women with economic independence. This rationale for educating girls, then, rests on socially conservative assumptions about gender. We do not want to imply that the *mawlawî*s' conservatism is out of the ordinary, however—for the male and female schoolteachers we interviewed also voiced such grounds for educating girls.

*Mawlawî*s are also similar to schoolteachers in their (seemingly quite unashamed) urban and middle-class prejudices about villagers and the poor. In a sense, girls' education is a terrain on which a gendered *and* urban-based class project is worked out, in the schools of Bijnor just as much as in the *madâris*. In independent India, Muslims have repeatedly faced allegations of 'backwardness' and 'conservatism,' and the financial and other contributions of wealthy Muslims to

[22] Cf. Jeffery et al. (2004).

madâris may reflect their snobberies about the purported failings of their poorer brethren. In other words, *madâris* such as those in Bijnor can be read as part of a class project aimed at 'gentrifying' rural and poor urban Indian Muslims by transforming their pupils into replicas of their urbane and respectable middle class co-religionists. While this 'civilizing mission' presumes that people's supposed inadequacies are remediable rather than congenital, it also rests on the symbolic violence of disparagement. The poor and the illiterate are reviled as dirty and uncivilized, their speech as crude and their parenting faulty—and their children must be disciplined into behavioral patterns that reflect self-control and good manners, respect and docile obedience towards elders and 'betters,' tidiness and cleanliness. Children on the receiving end of such educational regimes—whether in *madâris* or in schools—are unlikely to experience them positively. They may (in any case) find that poverty and rural livelihoods make it impossible to comply with these regimes.[23]

Despite such commonalities in the gender and class agendas of schools and *madâris*, we must not forget that *madâris* are providing formal education to one segment of the population: Muslims, particularly poor and rural Muslims. In our recent research, which focussed on how secondary education in general is changing patterns and processes of social inequality and social exclusion, we have discussed the increasing diversity and fragmentation of the educational sector in UP. In the contemporary political and economic climate, access to more or less valued forms of education largely operates along lines of pre-existing division and privilege. *Madâris* are a reflection of these more general processes, and (as recent history has also shown) can also become crucial ciphers in the battle of words connected with communal politics. Communal issues are undoubtedly salient to any attempt to comprehend *madrasa* education in contemporary India—but to see *madâris* simply as 'Islamic' institutions would be to simplify an extremely complex situation. Focussing on the views of *mawlawî*s about girls' education suggests that the issues of gender and urban middle-class bias are also crucial to understanding the educational philosophies of *madrasa* staff—as well as of others more generally engaged in the educational scene in western UP.

[23] Cf. Jeffery et al. (2004); Jeffery et al. (forthcoming-a).

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10

Muslim Reactions to the Post-9/11 Media Discourse on the Indian *Madāris*

MAREIKE JULE WINKELMANN

Madrasa education is a part of a Muslim child's religious tradition.[1]

INTRODUCTORY THOUGHTS

In the aftermath of 9/11, Indian *madâris* received increased attention from the media, mainly due to the assumed link between terrorism and *madrasa* education. While one set of reactions to the accusations emerged from the non-Muslim majority, there was simultaneously a counter-reaction from the Muslim communities. The images and sentiments invoked on the part of the former resembled a nation-wide 'Holy War' against the *madâris* and tallied with earlier colonial and radical Hindu discourses that attempted to sketch an imagery of Muslims as inclined toward violence.[2] The *madâris* in turn fit into the above imagery as breeding grounds for the 'angry young man,' thought to be readily available for participating in and initiating anti-national and terrorist activities. In the following sections, I would like to focus on the multi-layered reactions of the Muslim communities to the above allegations. The choice of my source material is limited to a number of English magazines and newspapers as mentioned in the list of references, and even though I do not claim the image sketched in the following sections to be exhaustive, the sources used are nevertheless

[1] Rahman (2002b).
[2] Cf. Viswanathan (1989) and Gupta (2001) for the history and detailed examples of such anti-Muslim imagery.

representative of those who actively took part in and engaged themselves with the newspaper articles published in the Indian dailies around the same time. To complement this limited perspective, I draw on my own fieldwork materials gathered in girls' *madâris* in Delhi between 2001 and 2004.

India in the Aftermath of 9/11

Following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the US, a series of events took place in India that added fuel to the already tensed-up situation worldwide. The global scenario became sensitized to a whole cluster of questions regarding Islam, Muslim immigrants in non-Muslim countries, and Islamic education—to name but a few. By a similar token, in India the aftermath of 9/11 meant a continuation of preceding developments, starting off with the destruction of the Bâbarî Masjid in Ayodhya, the following riots, and the onset of the Bhâratîya Janatâ Party's [BJP] governing period in the early 1990s.

For example, on December 13, 2001, masked gunmen attacked the Indian Parliament. In reaction to the shoot-out, media voices pointed their fingers in the direction of Pakistan, demanding that the neighboring country should stop funding its *madâris*, where *mujâhidîn* such as those thought to have attacked the Parliament would be trained. During a second incident, just a little over a month later on January 22, 2002, unidentified gunmen attacked the American Information Center in Kolkata. This time, the Government of West Bengal was quick to establish links between the attack, the ISI (one of the Pakistani Intelligence services) and the Bengali *madâris* located on the border with East Pakistan (Bangladesh). As a result of the perceived links, numerous *madrasa* teachers were arrested and subsequently charged with the Kolkata attack. Furthermore, West Bengal's Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattâchhârya launched a campaign against unrecognized *madâris* and threatened to shut them down altogether.

As a third event, in February 2002 the former Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee charged a committee of four ministers, headed by the former Home Minister Advâni, who was known for his anti-Muslim sentiments, with the task of surveying the *madâris* countrywide. Finally, in the same month, another milestone was represented by the carnage in Gujarat, which like the incidents mentioned earlier was utilized in a similar vein for the Indian government's anti-*madrasa* campaign.

Although it was mainly Muslims who were brutally killed during the pogroms, this did not stop Hindu fundamentalist parties, such as the Râshtrîya Svayamsevak Sangh [RSS], the Vishva Hindû Parishad [VHP] or the Bajrang Dal from calling the *madâris* centers of hatred. Regarding the following drive to reform the *madâris* in Gujarat, one national English newspaper reported: 'The Narender Modi government in Gujarat, which has just now presided over the most organized pogrom against people in contemporary India, seems to have hit upon a brainwave: Reform the madrasas first, because it is there that impressionable Muslim minds are indoctrinated into terrorism and fundamentalism.'[3]

Next, against the background of the US-initiated war with Afghanistan, the focus gradually shifted to the *Dâr al-'ulûm* in Deoband. On the one hand, the new focus on Deoband had to do with the publicized 'history' of links between Deoband in India, Deobandis in Pakistan, and the Tâlibân regime. On the other hand, owing to the *madrasa* survey issued by Advâni's committee, the country came to 'know' that most Indian *madâris* were linked with the *Dâr al-'ulûm*, which 'helped' to identify the local 'Axis of Evil.'

What was Published

In a report published on the internet, three concerned Muslim authors paraphrased the situation in the following words: 'The Taliban in Afghanistan and the WTC tragedy in the US have brought the Madarsah [sic] (religious school) into the limelight. Labeled as breeding grounds of Islamic terrorism, Madarsahs [sic] suddenly find themselves under harsh scrutiny. In India, Hindutva and sections of the government and the press have started a campaign against the Madarsahs [sic] branding them as centers of obscurantism and breeding grounds for "terrorism".'[4] Against this background, suspicion arose regarding the credentials of what was written about the *madâris*, as for the most part the allegations seemed to be based on stereotypes rather than on substantiated information. To quote the same report: 'Most critics of the Madarsahs [sic] have probably never visited a Madarsah [sic], and so much of what is said is pure hearsay. Yet, it may indeed be true that in some Madarsahs [sic], students are taught to see all non-Muslims

[3] Muhammad Sajid Qasmi (2002: 84) (quoted from *Asian Age*, June 18, 2002). Narendra Modi was at that time the BJP Chief Minister of Gujarat.
[4] Cf. Khan et al. (2003: 2).

as kafirs or rebels against God doomed to perdition in Hell and so on. This understanding of the “other” is actually something that they share with Hindutva militants, whose image of Muslims is no less lurid.'[5]

In line with the above, Zafar al-Islâm Khân,[6] editor of the Delhi-based English *Milli Gazette*, pointed out that in his opinion most journalists publishing their 'findings' about the *madâris* lacked access and insight into the issue. Overall, the image projected was dominated by expressions such as indoctrination, violence, and backwardness, while historically speaking the *madâris* used to be major centers of learning, scientific innovation, and high culture.[7] By contrast, the contemporary imagery appeared to be informed by premature conclusions drawn on the basis of a presupposed similarity with the situation in Pakistan or the border region *madâris*, where the environment is more politicized and polarized due to structural factors, such as the ongoing tensions over Kashmir and unceasing cross border violence. In reaction to the controversial report on the *madâris* issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs under Advâni, Khân concludes, 'Until now the authorities have not been able to identify a single *madrasa* in the country providing any sort of military training,'[8] which may be read as an underlying comparison with the Râshtrîya Svayamsevak Sangh schools, known to provide military training for children—without their credentials being questioned under the present circumstances.

This shows how Muslims attempted to counter the negative projections regarding Islamic education, since the accusations had caused harm to broader segments of the Muslim communities than merely to those involved directly in *madrasa* education. In addition to 'apologetic' reactions that aimed at restoring the reputation of *madrasa* education, there were also more confident reports about *madâris* of a 'different' kind, of which I would like to introduce the following examples: (1) the Jâmi‘at al-hidâya in Jaipur; (2) the Jâmi‘at as-sâlihât in Rampur; (3) the Khadîjat al-kubrâ in Okhla/ New Delhi; and finally (4) the Markaz al-ma‘ârif with its branch offices in New Delhi and Mumbai.

[5] Ibid.: 4.

[6] The interview was conducted by the author in November 2001 in the *Milli Gazette*'s head office in Abul Fazl Enclave, New Delhi.

[7] Regarding the history of *madrasa* education in general, cf. Grandin and Gaborieau (1997); Brandenburg (1978); and for India in particular, cf. Metcalf (1982); Malik (1997).

[8] Sikand (2003).

Jāmi'at al-hidāya

As a hi-tech *madrasa'*,[9] the Jâmi'at al-hidâya stands out in many ways. Somewhat embittered, and by way of summarizing the current situation from his point of view, Firoz Ahmed states that post-9/11 the *madâris* 'end up proving their secular credentials besides providing the authorities with certificates of loyalty.'[10] Introducing the Jâmi'at al-hidâya as a 'completely new experiment with the traditional *madrasa* education system,'[11] the author explains that apart from the theological content, which is based on the syllabi of the *Dâr al-'ulûm* in Deoband, the Nadwat al-'ulamâ' in Lucknow, and the Mazâhir al-'ulûm in Saharanpur, this *madrasa* also provides training in non-Islamic subjects. For example, the Jâmi'a offers degree courses in Computer Applications, Accounts and Business Management, Pharmacy, and other subjects, the contents of which were designed in collaboration with the 'Alîgarh Muslim University. Hence, in the opinion of the same author, this 'institution is an apt example of how a *madrasa* must be in the age of science and technology.'[12] By contrast, the dilemma most graduates from 'common *madâris*'—i.e. those that in contrast with the Jâmi'at al-hidâya do not provide education in non-Islamic subjects alongside the theological curriculum—face is that 'poor students who pass out from these madrasas quite unfortunately become misfits in the practical world since they can't decipher numbers on the buses or stations' names while traveling in a train.'[13] In other words, an exclusively Islamic curriculum does not seem to prepare the students well for life outside the *madrasa*, in a predominantly non-Islamic environment.

As opposed to these 'unfortunate ones,' the author states that the graduates of this 'Oxford of the madrasa education in the country' find 'prestigious jobs in places like Citibank, Kuwait Embassy, Luxor Pens, Escorts, Indian Railways, Rashtriya Sahara, etc.'[14] Drawing on another source, the extensive list of recommendations regarding the proposed modernization of the *madrasa* curriculum published by the Hamdard Education Society mentions, 'An ambitious plan of vocational education should be drawn upon on the pattern of Jamiat-ul-Hidaya [sic] which has three academic streams, viz. (a) religious education and

[9] Ahmed (2002).
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

modern education; (b) religious education and vocational training in job-oriented courses; (c) religious education.'[15]

Jāmi'at as-sālihāt

While the Jâmi'at al-hidâya offers education only for boys, the Jâmi'at as-sâlihât in Rampur prides itself on more than three decades of progressive *madrasa* education at the secondary level for girls. Founded by members of the Jamâ'at-i islâmî-yi Hind, the *madrasa* now caters to the needs of more than a thousand students hailing from all over India.[16] The author claims that the Jâmi'at as-sâlihât 'is not only changing the concept of women education in the country but also giving a facelift to *madrasa* concept,' as up to the eighth standard, the *madrasa* 'follows complete NCERT [National Council of Educational Research and Training] syllabus and teaches every subject taught in a modern public school.' Apart from the theological and NCERT curriculum in English, Urdu, and Arabic, the Jâmi'a also provides computer education from the fifth standard onwards. Finally, the *madrasa* offers numerous facilities on its campus, such as 'a small hospital, a canteen, a general store and a bank.' As the Jâmi'at as-sâlihât is one of the oldest and largest girls' *madâris* in India, it has inspired others to set up similar institutions.

Khadijat al-kubra

Drawīng on my fiēldwork in New Delhi, I would like to introduce a second girls' *madrasa* that has a set-up comparable to the above example. The Khadîjat al-kubrâ Public School/ Girls' *madrasa*[17] in Okhla was founded under the patronage of the Ahl-i hadîth movement. Regarding the question why parents choose to send their daughters to a *madrasa*, the principal's sister suggested that girls hailing from rural areas and economically (relatively) deprived backgrounds who attend a *madrasa* are often the first women in their families to receive formal education. She continued to argue that as the girls' parents are often illiterate, they would not be able to distinguish between a 'school' and a *madrasa*, adding that especially *madâris* that offer English-medium

[15] Cf. Khan et al. (2003: 36); Hamdard Education Society (2003). Major Findings and Recommendations. In: *Evaluation Report on Modernization of the Madarsah* [sic] *Education Scheme (UP)*, New Delhi: Hamdard Education Society.

[16] Cf. Rahman (2001).

[17] Interestingly enough, while the Khadîjat al-kubrâ's advertising brochure refers to the institution as a 'Public School,' i.e. a private school, the principal as well as the teachers and students refer to it as a *madrasa*. Hence the double labeling, which may be the result of the ongoing attempt for recognition from the government.

education alongside Islamic subjects 'lure' parents into sending their children to a *madrasa*. However, in my opinion the above argument, though often voiced, downplays the impact and importance of the *madrasa* as an institution of Islamic learning and fails to do justice to the parents' agency. Although it might be the case that occasionally the decision to send a daughter to a *madrasa* is made 'by mistake,' this is more likely to be the exception than the rule, because if such a 'mistake' was the rule, the *madâris* should be empty instead of mushrooming as they are. What appears to come in as a more plausible explanation is the following: most girls from rural and economically (relatively) deprived backgrounds come from large families with many children to feed, and since the *madâris* provide education in return for nominal fees, offer boarding facilities, feed the students three meals a day, and often also ensure adequate medical care, sending one or more daughters to a *madrasa* is often an attractive option, apart from the religious merit of such a decision.

In line with the above, the Khadîjat al-kubrâ too offers education for those who are economically less well off. As for the founding history behind the *madrasa*, in 1980 Mawlânâ ‘Abd al-Hamîd Rahmânî established the Abul Kalam Azad Islamic Awakening Centre. In its foundation statement we read that the *Salafî* Movement, which is equated with the Ahl-i hadîth, used to thrive in Delhi prior to Partition, as the (reformist) traditions of Shâh Walî Allâh Dihlawî (d. 1762), Shâh Ismâ‘îl Dihlawî (killed 1831), and Shaykh Nadhîr Husayn 'Muhaddith' Dihlawî (d. 1902) were kept alive in the capital especially through the Madrasat rahîmiyya,[18] one of the largest Ahl-i hadîth *madâris* in Delhi. Following Partition, the '*Salafî* youth' revived the Ahl-i hadîth traditions in Delhi from 1980 onwards and the Abul Kalam Azad Islamic Awakening Centre in turn stood behind the foundation of the Khadîjat al-kubrâ in 1985.[19]

[18] At present, the Madrasat rahîmiyya is the only Islamic seminary in Delhi registered with the Waqf Board.

[19] This overview is based on the brochure of the Abul Kalam Azad Islamic Awakening Centre, New Delhi. Apart from the Khadîjat al-kubrâ, the Abul Kalam Azad Islamic Awakening Centre also runs the Institute of Islamic Education, the Sharî‘a College Sanâbil, and a vocational center. Interestingly enough, the Abul Kalam Azad Islamic Awakening Centre not only has its branches within India, but the Sharî‘a College also maintains ties with the three big Islamic universities in Saudi Arabia: the International Islamic University in Medina, the Jâmi‘at Imâm Muhammad b. Sa‘ûd in Riyadh, and the Jâmi‘at umm al-qurâ in Mecca. Apart from ensuring funding through these channels, students who qualify at the Sharî‘a College are 'eligible to get admission' in these institutions.

Women's education ranks high on the Abul Kalam Azad Islamic Awakening Centre's list of priorities. In the 'Introduction' of the same brochure we read, 'The school building was completed in 1999. It imparts modern education along with Islamic education up to Senior Secondary Level. It has a strength of 520 students. Steps have been taken to get the school recognized by the CBSE [Central Board for Secondary Education], so as to enable the students passing the secondary exams to pursue their higher studies in a regular way. The school shall ultimately be elevated to a degree college for women, Insha Allah.' A few pages further, in the section titled 'Plans and Programmes for Future,' number two on the list is the establishment of a Khadîjat al-kubrâ Girls College. The 'school has been proposed to be developed into a girls college where the main emphasis would be on Islamic theology. The plan carries more value and weight because of the fact that our female community is a neglected lot particularly in the field of education. We intend to provide secular education as well as advanced theology courses so that our women could face the challenges of the modern age. We would like to give priority to this plan.'

The Khadîjat al-kubrâ's advertising brochure claims that the school's syllabus comprises the Central Board for Secondary Education courses, along with Urdu, *dîniyyât*, Qur'ân (from the Nursery Class onwards), Arabic (from class VI), and computer education (from class III onwards). All subjects are taught in English, 'however, besides English the subject is explained in Urdu as well. Hindi and Urdu are also taught along with English as compulsory Subjects at all levels.' Notably, in a following section on the 'Khadijat-ul-Kubra's Aims and Objectives,' we read that the school also welcomes non-Muslim students, 'without discriminating them on the basis of religion, community, caste or creed so that they may also feel the cool breeze of Islamic culture and society.' As for the important question of how seriously the Islamic component is taken, in the paragraph on 'Examinations & Promotions' we read that the students have to ensure that they pass with at least 80 out of 100 marks 'in each of the subjects of the Holy Qur'an, Deeniat [sic], English, Maths, and Science.' Also the ranking of subjects shows that religious education [*dînî ta'lîm*] is of grave importance, as a student can be expelled on account of failing one of the religious subjects twice.

As opposed to other exclusively Islamic girls' *madâris*, the Khadîjat al-kubrâ makes 'Games & Sports' compulsory for all students. Among the sports offered are volleyball, badminton, and indoor games. Apart

from such physical activities, the teachers organize regular 'Educational Tours & Picnics' 'whenever possible' and 'the location usually is a historical place, a specialized institution, an unusual site, a museum or a zoo.' The worldview the Khadîjat al-kubrâ seeks to promote could be described as nationalist with special regard for the *millat*, as in the aforementioned 'Aims and Objectives' section we read, 'The institution aims at moulding the thoughts and beliefs, the hearts and minds and the bodies and souls of the students in the true Islamic frame work. To inculcate the all these characteristics to the children which would make them a law-abiding, conscientious and sincere *citizen*. To imbue a sense of *national* and (Milli) concern so that they may become good *citizens* of our nation and Millat.'[20] Striving to provide a structural framework that allows space for both Indian cultural and Islamic elements, we find the celebrations of Independence Day, Gandhi's birthday [*Gândhî jayantî*], Republic Day, ʻÎd al-fitr, ʻÎd al-adhâ, and Holi on the 'List of Holidays and Vacation.' In the case of the Khadîjat al-kubrâ, the spirit of a 'local Islam' and the acceptance of its *couleur locale* pervade the layout of the school building too, as it is plastered with citations of Gandhi, the Qur'ân, the *ahâdîth*, and drawings that signify pluralist India under its uniting flag.

Markaz al-maʻārif

Apart from questions of gender and the inclusion of non-Islamic subjects in the *madrasa* curriculum, an equally urgent question concerns the future trajectories of *madrasa* graduates, or rather the relative lack thereof. Herein, the Delhi- and Mumbai-based post-graduation education centers named Markaz al-maʻârif represent a novelty.[21] The introductory remark of the *Milli Gazette* article states, 'They [i.e. the students] have everything to surprise anyone believing in the orthodoxy of *madrasa* graduates. Meet them and get the first hand experience of what a *madrasa* student could look like after being given some exposure to English and good teachers.'[22] Beyond the literal meaning, this opening statement can be read as a response to a number of stereotypes regarding *madrasa* students, such as that *madrasa* students are necessarily 'orthodox,' thereby introducing a seemingly unbridgeable divide between them and 'progressive' Muslims; that the lack of

[20] Emphases added.
[21] Cf. Rahman (2002a). Moreover, this section is based on personal contacts with representatives of the Markaz al-maʻârif over a long period.
[22] Ibid. (emphases added).

exposure to and training in English serves as an explanation for what is commonly perceived as the 'backwardness' of *madrasa* students; and finally that one of the main problems the *madâris* face is the lack of adequately trained teachers. Apparently, the people behind the Markaz al-ma‘ârif have found ways of successfully dealing with these issues. The author continues, 'With flowing beards and traditional *madrasa* dress of *kurta* and *pyjama* not lower than ankles, these young people flaunt fluent English and etiquette believed to be prerogative of only people with a Public School background.' In short, the Markaz al-ma‘ârif appears to fill a void in its aim to change 'the whole perspective of madrasas [sic] and their outlook,' as 'in this competitive world [...] it is just impossible to walk without arming with modern education.' Apart from being a registered NGO, dedicated to social work in various Indian states where the center runs English medium schools, primary schools, orphanages, and healthcare centers, the Markaz al ma‘ârif trains graduates from leading *madâris* all over the country—among them the *Dâr al-‘ulûm* in Deoband, the Nadwat al-‘ulamâ’ in Lucknow, and the Mazâhir al-‘ulûm in Saharanpur—in, among other non-Islamic subjects, English and computer skills. Following the entry test advertised in numerous larger and smaller *madâris*, an average of 20 graduates per year receive funding to take the two-year training in the Markaz al-ma‘ârif.

Contested Questions of Reform and Modernization

On the one hand, in the aftermath of 9/11, the allegations voiced vis-à-vis the *madâris* gave rise to calls for reform of the *madrasa* education system from within the Muslim community. However, we should keep in mind that this has been an ongoing project that many Muslims concerned with the condition of the *madâris* have been dedicated to for decades. Regarding the proposed reforms, the Chicago-based historian Muzaffar Alam notes that 'the sad part of the present times is that the BJP Government has been targeting these *madrasas* as breeding ground for conservatism and obscurantism.'[23] On the other hand, there were also calls for more transparency of the *madrasa* system, which was hoped to be achieved with the establishment of a Central Madrasa Board, similar to those that already function at the state level in Assam, Bihar, Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Uttar Pradesh. There, the boards are authorized to check the incoming funds of the affiliated

[23] Alam (2002).

madâris, curb possible associations with terrorist organizations, and serve as a link between the state and the *madâris*. At the national level, the establishment of a Central Madrasa Board is an issue tackled by non-Muslims and Muslims alike, though for different reasons. For its non-Muslim advocates the main priority is the attempt towards transparency of *madrasa* education through checks of funding sources and assimilation to non-Islamic education, and enforcing the right to regulate *madrasa* curricula and to appoint teachers for internal monitoring. By contrast, for the Muslim communities the pivotal issues are the need for funding and hopes for recognition of *madrasa* education as an alternative form of education in its own right.

The reactions to this proposition have been ambivalent, even among the Muslim communities. While admitting that 'steps should be taken to encourage these institutions [i.e. *madâris*] to add inputs on modern education,'[24] simultaneously there is a fear that central monitoring of the *madâris* may lead to disadvantageous interference on the part of the (by and large non-Muslim) government. Though claiming that it is 'a fact of life that madrasas [sic] are doing a wonderful job and providing education to millions of people in the country,'[25] it is conceded that there is also 'confusion,' as some *madâris* seem 'unable to come out with a plan that can convince even them.'[26] Here, the problem of lack of future perspectives and professional opportunities for *madrasa* graduates is addressed, and hence there is a perceived need to 'streamline these madrasas [sic] and put them on a track,'[27] which could be one of the tasks of a Central Madrasa Board. In return, 'For bringing madrasas [sic] into mainstream with the benefits of the modern educational system, state governments should provide financial support for these madrasas [sic].'[28] However, 'Most Madarsahs [sic] choose to survive without governmental grants because of two basic reasons: they feel government funding would lead to governmental intervention in their work, jeopardizing their independence; and two, the teachers of such government supported Madarsahs [sic] start behaving like government employees (having the assurance that whether they work sincerely or not, they will get their salaries).'[29]

[24] Rahman (2002b).
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Khan et al. (2003: 21).

Others view the suggested cooperation between the *madâris*, which would give up their independent status, and the state, which in turn would alleviate the burden of fund raising, as 'a welcome step.' The situation in the national capital was put in the following words: 'Amid growing allegations of misuse of *madâris* by terrorists, Delhi government is working to register all such religious institutions in the capital and set up a board to run them to help remove the "crisis of credibility".'[30] Apprehensions nevertheless remained, as a few weeks later, under the heading 'Muslim Law Board opposes bill on *madrasas*,' it was claimed that 'Terming the setting up of a Madrasa Board an infringement of the Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution and an interference in the rights of Muslims, [...] participants said it was a deliberate ploy to defame these educational institutions.'[31] A concerned reader, using a pseudonym suggesting that she or he was a Muslim, added that the setting up of a Central Madrasa Board would be 'yet another government effort to harass poor Muslims [...]. If the government is serious in combating extremism, then why just madrasas [sic], why not temple trusts.' Anxieties were voiced that rather than aiming at the amelioration of working conditions for the *madâris*, the government would instead strive to regulate and control them. In other words, 'there is a fear that these monitoring bodies might be turned into regulatory bodies.' Moreover, some opined that so far the government-run *madâris* in other states with Central Madrasa Board-affiliations have not proven to function well, and one author even labeled them 'worst performers,' comparing them with government-run primary schools, where by a similar token teachers would fail to live up to their task. Others countered that ultimately such malpractices could be prevented through active involvement on the part of 'Muslim Ulama [sic] and intellectuals' whose task it should be to prepare and monitor the implementation of a common syllabus.[32]

[30] Anonymous (2002a).

[31] Anonymous (2002b). While in post-Partition India a 'Uniform Civil Code' was sought, minority rights nevertheless granted freedom of religion, and hence Muslims have since maintained their own 'Personal Law' in line with the *sharî'a*. The All India Muslim Personal Law Board [AIMPLB] came into being to protect the 'Indian Muslim Personal Law' from attempts at reform on the part of the (changing) non-Muslim governments.

[32] These reactions of that 'concerned reader,' writing under the pseudonym 'ILYAS33,' had been available under http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/opinions/23009017.cms when accessed in 2002. However, it has now obviously been taken off the web for one reason or the other.

While calls for the proposed setting up of a Central Madrasa Board remain a contested issue, the modernization or modification of the *madrasa* syllabus is yet another question tackled by the media. The latter issue falls under the broader heading of calls for reform of the *madrasa* education system, and appears to be particularly sensitive. In a nutshell, utilitarian arguments regarding the expected increase in the market value of *madrasa* graduates from such modernized *madâris* are pitted against apologetics and justifications as to why the *madrasa* curriculum should remain unchanged. On the one hand, many Muslim intellectuals and those involved in the project of *madrasa* education as 'outsiders' state that some degree of modernization of the curriculum is needed. On the other hand, voices of those more inclined to preserve the legacy of *madrasa* education in a more or less unchanged form typically come from inside the *madrasa* institutions, claiming that 'Madrasas [sic] have been established for the particular purpose of producing Ulama [sic] having command over Islamic Sciences that require full time and attention.'[33] The arguments put forward by both sides stem from different language orders. For those in favor of maintaining the *madrasa* curriculum as it is, economic arguments may hold little or no value at all, because 'looking in the matter only from financial point of view, those who suggest government employment for Ulama [sic] do not they know that in a country like India millions of modern educated youths are wandering the streets unemployed [...] If the madrasa product do not increase the crowd and content themselves with lesser income then what is the problem.'[34] Apparently, piety and religious merit can hardly be measured up against market dynamics.

On the 'other side,' government officials seemed to realize that an outright crackdown on the *madâris* may have led to a further estrangement between the state and the *madâris*, and this insight resulted in the implementation of government programs aiming to promote the assimilation of *madâris* to non-Islamic forms of education. Nizâm Ilâhî, himself a '*madrasa* product,' as he said during a conversation in his office at the SCERT [State Council of Educational Research and Training] in late 2001, documented one such program, wherein the Delhi government made an attempt to train teachers who would introduce non-Islamic subjects in *madâris*.[35] The teachers were equipped with

[33] Muhammad Sajid Qasmi (2002: 97).
[34] Muhammadullah Muhammad Khalili Qasmi (2002: 98).
[35] See Elahi (2001).

learning materials for subjects such as modern mathematics, physics, and Hindi, but despite all efforts, according to Elâhî, the program failed on two accounts. First, there was a communication gap between those in charge of the program and the teachers they were supposed to train, and second, the government in turn did not live up to its promise, since in many cases the teachers were not paid the salaries they had been promised.

Misconceptions Reciprocated

The outcome of the above-mentioned program shows that despite good intentions, it may take efforts of a different kind to bridge the gap between *madrasa* and non-Islamic education. Attempting to understand the causes of the alienation between these two alternative education systems has been an important part of my fieldwork in girls' *madâris* as well. For example, a university lecturer once asked me whether I was willing to give an informal talk about my fieldwork in a prestigious girls' college in Delhi. The audience consisted of young teachers-to-be, and their perceptions of the *madâris* represented a sample of the middle- to upper-middle-class non-Muslim stereotypes. To begin with, the young women in question knew next to nothing about *madâris*, although 'confessional schools' formed a module of their teachers' training program, which suggested that neither the lecturers nor the textbooks provided any substantial information regarding the *madâris*. Second, as far as their views regarding Muslims were concerned, these were by and large colored by the stereotypes utilized for political propaganda, as reproduced by the non-Muslim media.

However, such stereotyping is far from being the monopoly of the non-Muslim majority, as the situation in the girls' *madâris* was not all that different. Neither the teachers nor the students in the girls' *madrasa* wherein I carried out the main portion of my fieldwork had been exposed to non-Islamic education prior to enrolment in a *madrasa*. In other words, despite living in a predominantly non-Muslim environment, the teachers and students have very little exposure to outside influences, owing to their observing a particularly strict form of *parda*[36] and to the worldview of this Muslim community. Regarding the latter

[36] The concept of *parda* [curtain] denotes both wearing 'modest dress,' including a veil or a *burqa*, as well as the physical segregation of male and female spaces.

it is worthwhile noting that it is a widely shared opinion that it is feasible for a girl, prior to attaining the age of *parda*, to be exposed as much as possible to non-Islamic education. Hence, the principal, who is also the most senior and authoritative teacher in the girls' *madrasa*, sends her two daughters to a well-known public school and not to a *madrasa*. She even said that she would prefer for her daughters to attend an English medium public school, but she was not at all aware of where those schools were, how one would get admission to them, and finally she opined that 'these schools are not for poor people like us,' suggesting that opting for *madrasa* education can happen for want of an alternative. This is even more likely considering that the young women in this girls' *madrasa* hailed from a lower- to lower-middle-class background, where they were often the first women in their families to become literate or to take up a paid job as a teacher in a girls' *madrasa*.

Furthermore, the misconceptions about non-Islamic education voiced in the context of this girls' *madrasa* were as strong as the misconceptions about Islamic education referred to above. The teachers and students in the girls' *madrasa* viewed the 'free mingling of the sexes' and the disastrous consequences of such 'immodest' behavior, such as unwanted pregnancies among adolescents, as particularly problematic. With regard to the above, Rahman, in an essay on the Pakistani *madâris* and the state, points to the so-called '*radd*-literature,' i.e. texts that serve to refute 'alien' world views. Although, these texts may not be formally taught in the *madrasa*, they are readily available. This holds true for the Indian context as well, where countless treatises in Urdu, Hindi, and English can be found in local bookshops. These treatises address a multitude of everyday topics in which 'the West' is invariably sketched as depraved, thereby proving the superiority of Islam and Islamic societies over alien influences that symbolize the constant threat of corruption. Nevertheless, the young women's disregard for co-educational non-Islamic educational institutions was mixed with the desire to improve their condition economically and socially, conceding that nowadays this would best be achieved through English medium education, suggesting an awareness that through *madrasa* education they would continue to be outsiders in a non-Islamic environment. Finally, this awareness seemed to function as a source of pride—rooted in the perceived moral superiority over the decadent 'other'—and anxiety, as far as their limited future prospects were concerned.

Concluding Thoughts

As we saw earlier, in the aftermath of 9/11 the *madâris* have come under great scrutiny, while the credentials of non-Islamic schools tend to remain unquestioned. Interestingly enough, it is mainly in Muslim minority countries that the *madâris* have recently received more attention. One possible explanation is that—especially in Muslim minority countries including Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, France, and India, where Islamic schools have been scrutinized and targeted in similar ways post-9/11—religion has by and large been banned from the public sphere, while Islam appears to be thriving. Moreover, its followers are often socially highly visible through contested identity markers such as the veil and other forms of modest dress, and Islam appears to be winning converts, which makes it prone to being perceived as a threat to the respective dominant culture or *Leitkultur*, all the more so since Islam often takes on a political dimension and its followers stand by its hegemonic aspirations.

In line with this, the Muslim 'Other' is presented as a threat to the security and well-being of the non-Muslim majority in India for political reasons. As one author puts it: 'The omens are clear. India under the BJP is steadily moving towards becoming a fascist state where the "Other" will be actively and vigorously identified and persecuted by official agencies. Since *madâris* and mosques, which have posed no threat throughout the centuries and which played a very active role in India's freedom struggle, are now regarded as enemy hideouts and ISI centers, an era of active persecution will begin, where the onus of proof of innocence will be on the victims, not on the accusers and persecutors.'[37]

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[37] Muhammadullah Muhammad Khalili Qasmi (2002: 107).

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11

The Indian *Madāris* and the Agenda of Reform

Yoginder Sikand

Reforming the *madâris* has today emerged as a major concern. Governments, such as those of India, Pakistan, and, of course, countries in the West, particularly the US, are now eagerly seeking to enforce changes in the *madrasa* educational system. They seem to fear that 'unreformed' *madâris* are rapidly emerging as major training grounds for 'terrorists.' In addition, many Muslims, including numerous *'ulamâ'* themselves, are also in the forefront of demands for change in the *madrasa* system. The different actors in this complex political game have widely different understandings of reform, each reflecting their own particular agendas. This chapter seeks to examine the different ways in which reform of the *madâris* in contemporary India is imagined and advocated by a range of actors, including different sections of the *'ulamâ'*, Muslim social activists, right-wing Hindus and the Indian state.

Before we go on to a discussion of the question of *madrasa* reform, it is pertinent to keep in mind the role that the *'ulamâ'* and many, though not all, Muslims actually envisage for the *madâris*. Arguments for *madrasa* reform often miss the point that, as many Muslims see it, the *madrasa* is not meant to be an institution for the general education of Muslims, training them for the job market. Rather, the *madrasa* is regarded as a specialized institution providing Muslims with specifically 'religious' education and transmitting the Islamic scholarly tradition. This being the case, the functioning of the *madâris* must be judged not according to any external criterion, but rather in terms of the goals that the *'ulamâ'* of the *madâris* and the students who study there set before them. As the former head of the Deoband *madrasa*, the late Qârî Muhammad Tayyib (d. 1983), insisted:

> When people criticize the *madrasa* syllabus, they forget that the aim of the *madrasa* is different from that of a modern school […] The only way to pass judgment on the *madâris* is to see how far they have been able to achieve their own aims, such as inculcating piety, promoting religious knowledge, control over the base self [*tahdhîb-î nafs*] and service of others. Therefore, no suggestion for reform of the syllabus which goes against these aims is acceptable.[1]

Critics of the *madâris* tend to see them in stereotypical terms, often branding all *madâris* as backward and reactionary. They are routinely described by their detractors—Muslims as well as others—as conservative and obscurantist. They are seen as a major burden on Muslim society, consuming much of its meagre resources, and a stumbling block in the progress of the community.[2] Much of what they teach is said to be 'useless' in the contemporary context, this complaint reflecting a view that 'useful' knowledge is that which helps equip a student to participate in the modern economy. A retired Muslim Indian Administrative Service [IAS] officer sums up the 'modernist' critique of the *madâris* and their *'ulamâ'* somewhat crudely and tendentiously thus:

> The authorities […] [of the] Indian *Madrasas* are completely oblivious of the repeated directions in the Holy Qur'an regarding the need to acquire competence in study and reflection over [sic] scientific phenomenon […] *Madrasas* have been promoting indifference towards modern and western education, so graduates of *Madrasas* find themselves unfit to breathe in the free air of the present age of science and technology. They would generally be suffering from inferiority complex [sic], hating everybody with modern education and themselves being hated by everybody with modern education […] Islam cannot be defended by these 'misfits' who know nothing of modern knowledge.[3]

Such critiques, while not entirely bereft of truth, appear somewhat far-fetched and exaggerated. To claim that all *madâris* are static and impervious to change is grossly misleading. As for the argument that

[1] Qâsimî (2000: 92) [translation mine].
[2] Cf. Bedâr (1995: 8) [translation mine].
[3] Ahmed (1990: 105).

madâris are conservative, this is to state the obvious, for, as the *madâris* generally see themselves, they are indeed the guardians of Islamic 'orthodoxy,' regarding their principal role as the conservation of what they see as the normative Islamic tradition, which, although diversely understood, historically constructed and in a constant process of elaboration, is generally seen by the *'ulamâ'* as unchanging and fixed. Not surprisingly, therefore, many *'ulamâ'* regard the existing *madrasa* system as in no need of any major reform. They argue that since in the past the *madâris* produced great Muslim scholars, there is no need for any change to be made in them today. If the *madâris* are not producing pious, God-fearing and socially engaged *'ulamâ'* today, the fault lies, so it is asserted, in the lowered standards of piety and dedication, and increasing materialism and the consequent straying from the path set by the pious elders, and not in the *madrasa* system as such, which is considered as largely adequate and in no need of any major reform.

The *'Ulamā'* and the Challenge of Reform: The Case of Deoband

The debates over *madrasa* reform reflect different understandings of appropriate Islamic education and indeed of Islam itself. As many 'traditionalist' *'ulamâ'* see it, since the 'elders' have evolved a perfect system of education, and since Islam itself is the ultimate truth, there is no need to learn from others. To seek to do so is sometimes regarded as a sign of weak faith and straying from the path that the 'elders' of the past have trod. Change in the *madrasa* system is therefore often considered as threatening the identity and intensity of the faith. At the same time, and perhaps more importantly, it is recognized as threatening to undermine the power of the *'ulamâ'* as leaders of the community and their claims to speak authoritatively for Islam. The *'ulamâ'* often see proposals for *madrasa* reform as threatening to interfere, if not invade, what they regard as their own territory. Since their claims for authority are based on their mastery of certain disciplines and texts, quite naturally any change in the syllabus, such as the introduction of new subjects or new books or the exclusion of existing ones, directly undermines their own claims. Besides, they fear that the introduction of 'modern' disciplines in the *madrasa* curriculum might lead to a creeping secularization of the institution as such, besides tempting their students away from the path of religion and enticing them towards

the snares of the world. Proposals for reform of the *madâris* by incorporating 'modern' subjects are sometimes seen as hidden ploys or even as grand conspiracies to dilute the religious character of the *madâris*. Religion is here understood as a distinct sphere, neatly set apart from other spheres of life. This is readily apparent in the writings of many *'ulamâ'*. Take, for instance, the following statement of Ashraf 'Alî Thânawî (d. 1943), a leading early 20th century Deobandî *'âlim*:

> It is, in fact, a source of great pride for the religious *madâris* not to impart any secular [*dunyâwî*] education at all. For if this is done, the religious character of these *madâris* would inevitably be grievously harmed. Some people say that *madâris* should teach their students additional subjects that would help them earn a livelihood, but this is not the aim of the *madrasa* at all. The *madrasa* is actually meant for those who have gone mad with their concern for the Hereafter [*jin ko fikr-i âkhirat ne dîwâna kar dîyâ hay*].[4]

Other *'ulamâ'* may not go to such lengths in denying the need for inclusion of 'modern' subjects in the curriculum, but might, while accepting the need for reform, argue that this should be strictly limited, and must not threaten or dilute the 'religious' character of the *madâris*. *Madâris*, they argue, are geared to the training of religious specialists, and so it is important that 'worldly' subjects not take the upper hand over religious instruction. Rather, it is enough, they stress, if the students are able to read and speak elementary English, perform basic mathematical problems and are familiar with basic social sciences (albeit suitably 'islamized'), and to that extent they welcome efforts for reform. It is sufficient that the *madrasa* students gain a general familiarity with these subjects so that they can function in the modern world. It is also argued that if too much attention were given to 'modern' subjects in the *madâris*, the work load for the students would be simply too much to bear, because of which they would turn out to be 'of little use either for the faith or for the world [*nâ dîn ke kâm kâ nâ dunyâ kâ*].'[5]

While these arguments may not be without merit, the opposition of some sections of the *'ulamâ'* to proposals for reform in the *madâris*

[4] Mazharî Nadwî (1996: 110) [translation mine].
[5] Ibid.

must be also seen as reflecting the fierce challenges that they perceive from Muslims articulating a different vision of Islam and Islamic knowledge. If all knowledge, conducted within the limits set by the Qur'ân and the Prophetic tradition, is Islamic, as many advocates of *madrasa* reform insist, the monopoly over the authoritative interpretation of Islam enjoyed by the *'ulamâ'* is considerably undermined, if not done away with altogether. If, as some reformers see it, a pious Muslim scientist researching the human cell or the stars in order to discover the laws of God, is as much an *'âlim* as one who has devoted his life to the study of the *hadîth*, the superior position that the *'ulamâ'* claim for themselves based on their expert knowledge of certain classical texts is effectively overturned.

Yet *madâris* are far from being completely immune to change and reform altogether. Likewise, few *'ulamâ'* could claim to be completely satisfied with the *madâris* as they are today. Indeed, leading *'ulamâ'* are themselves conscious of the need for change in the *madrasa* system. As their graduates go out and take up a range of new careers in India and abroad, and as pressures from within the community as well as from the state and the media for reform grow, *madâris* too are changing. Change is, however, gradual, emerging out of sharply contested notions of appropriate Islamic education.

The dilemmas that accompany change are well illustrated in the case of the *Dâr al-'ulûm* at Deoband, often considered to be a major bastion of conservatism. The Deobandîs stress a conformity to traditional understandings of Hanafî *fiqh*, and they tend to see the solution to all contemporary problems as lying in a rigid adherence to past *fiqh* formulations. New ways of interpreting Islam are seen as akin to heresy [*kufr*] and 'unauthorized and blameworthy innovation' [*bid'a*]. As Mamshâd 'Alî Qâsimî, himself a product of that *madrasa*, says, the traditional *'ulamâ'* 'don't want to change. They are scared of the light because they have got used to darkness.'[6] Yet, today there is mounting pressure from within the broader Deobandî fold for reform in the system of *madrasa* education.

Faced with increasingly vocal demands that Deoband should reform its syllabus, in October 1994 the *madrasa* organized a convention attended by a large number of teachers of Deobandî *madâris* from all over India. The convention was ostensibly held to discuss the question of reform of the syllabus of the *madâris* at length, but the inaugural

[6] Cf. Qâsimî (1994: 71) [translation mine].

lecture delivered by the current rector of the Deoband *madrasa*, Mawlânâ Marghûb ar-Rahmân, suggested how far the organizers were really willing to go in allowing for change. The Mawlânâ insisted that there was no need at all to introduce 'modern' education in the *madâris*. They were thousands of schools in the country, he said, and Muslim children who wanted to study 'modern' subjects could enroll there instead. Introducing 'modern' subjects in the *madrasa* would, he argued, 'destroy their [religious] character.' He argued that Islam had 'clearly divided' knowledge into two distinct categories of 'religious' and 'worldly.' 'The paths and destinations of these two branches of knowledge,' he claimed, 'were totally different,' indeed mutually opposed. 'If one seeks to travel on both paths together, combining "religious" and "worldly" knowledge,' he asserted, he would 'get stuck in the middle.' Hence, he stressed, *madâris* must remain 'purely religious,' as the Deobandî elders had themselves insisted.[7]

Predictably, the convention concluded with a unanimous decision not to make any concessions at all to those who were clamoring for reform of the *madrasa* curriculum. The convention passed a resolution declaring that because Islam was a 'complete and perfect religion [*mukammal dîn*],' it provided 'solutions to all problems.' Hence, to meet the challenges of modern life Muslims needed to rely 'only on the Qur'ân, *hadîth* and *fiqh*,' and there was no need for 'Western knowledge and culture.'[8] The only change in the *madrasa* syllabus that the convention agreed upon was cosmetic, to increase a couple of books for some subjects and to reduce the number of texts for others. As Mamshâd 'Alî Qâsimî caustically remarked:

> It seems that that the convention had not been organized to seriously discuss the *madrasa* curriculum, to make suitable changes in it in accordance with changing social conditions, to meet modern demands and to improve the functioning of the *madâris*. Rather, it appears to have been held simply to announce that all is well with the *madâris*, and that because they worked well in the past they are doing so today too, and to claim that those who are demanding reform have doubtful intentions. If this indeed was the intention of holding this convention, there was no need to do so. To prevent one's own weaknesses from being

[7] Cf. ibid.: 11 [translation mine].
[8] Ibid.: 13.

> publicized and to proclaim the victories of the past is not a constructive approach.[9]

Despite the great reluctance of the authorities at Deoband to allow any significant reform in the *madrasa* system, the winds of change are being felt today even in the hallowed portals of the *Dâr al-'ulûm*. In fact, the organizing of the above-mentioned convention was probably due, among other factors, to the increasingly vocal demands on the part of some younger Deobandîs that the *madrasa* needed to change with the times. Not every Deobandî is a die-hard conservative, and not all of them are opposed to change in the *madâris*. Qârî Muhammad Tayyib, the previous rector of the Deoband *madrasa*, seemed to be somewhat more flexible and open to change than his successor. Addressing a government-sponsored conference on *madrasa* education, he argued that no one could agree to change in the teaching of the Qur'ân in the *madâris*. However, as far as those subjects or books that were 'servants of the Qur'ân' [*khâdim-i qur'ân*] were concerned, they could be modified according to changing conditions. Explaining what he meant, he argued that the ways of understanding the Qur'ân could change over time. In the past, when Greek philosophy or Sufism were dominant, the Qur'ân was understood through their lenses. In today's 'scientific age,' however, the Qur'ân needed to be studied from a scientific perspective, generating new means of expressing the eternal truths of the sacred text. Therefore, he went on, books or subjects (in particular philosophy and logic) used to comprehend the Qur'ân must change with the times. In other words, he argued, there was scope for reform in the *madrasa* syllabus, but he insisted that it was for the *'ulamâ'* alone to decide the direction and extent of reform.[10]

The growing pressure for change at the *Dâr al-'ulûm* is due, at least partly, to the influence of young Deobandî graduates, who, after completing their studies at the *madrasa*, have gone to regular universities for higher studies or have taken up a range of occupations in India and abroad, but continue to maintain a link with their *alma mater*. Aware of the rapidly changing world around them, from which *madrasa* students are sought to be insulated, they help transmit new ideas that, in turn, have given birth to new initiatives at Deoband itself. An important role in this regard is played by the Tanzîm abnâ' al-qadîm, the 'Old Boys'

[9] Ibid.: 12.
[10] Cf. Qâsimî (2000: 92).

Association' of the Deoband *madrasa*, with its headquarters in Delhi. It has the following ambitious list of aims and objectives:

1. To set up study centers and libraries to promote awareness about national and international affairs.
2. To promote the study of the Qur'ân and *hadîth*, the movement of Shâh Walî Allâh Dihlawî (d. 1763) as well as of non-Islamic movements, and to publish literature on these.
3. To publish articles in newspapers and journals on religious issues and on social reform.
4. To promote religious as well as modern education.
5. To establish *sharî'a* committees in Muslim localities consisting of *'ulamâ'* and *a'imma* [sg. *imâm*] of mosques to solve disputes in accordance with the *sharî'a*.
6. To promote social reform in accordance with the *sharî'a*, e.g. discouraging wasteful expenses on celebrations, dowry, un-Islamic practices and unwarranted divorce.
7. To encourage Muslims to get involved in social work projects to help the poor.
8. To work along with people of other religions and castes for common social aims and for general relief and development of all, irrespective of religion and caste.
9. To promote interaction and good relations between people of different religions.
10. To remove misunderstandings about Islam and Muslims among non-Muslims.[11]

The Association publishes a monthly magazine in Urdu, the *Tarjumân-i dâr al-'ulûm*, which is widely read by graduates, students, and teachers of the Deoband *madrasa*, as well as of various other *madâris* affiliated to Deoband. The magazine serves as an important vehicle for the transmission of new ideas, including issues related to *madrasa* reform. In contrast to many *'ulamâ'* at Deoband itself, it insists on the need for reform in the *madrasa* system if *madâris* are to play a constructive role in society. It advocates a controlled 'modernization,' seeing this not as a departure from but rather as a return to Islam and the vision of the founders of the *Dâr al-'ulûm* in Deoband.

[11] Cf. Anonymous (n.d.: 1–7).

Its appeals to go back to the 'authentic' Islamic tradition serve, in fact, to facilitate change and reform, rather than to oppose it.

Thus, for instance, in an article published in the magazine, Mawlânâ Zayn as-Sâjid b. Qâsimî, a Deobandî graduate and now teacher of Islamic Studies at the ‘Alîgarh Muslim University, writes that *madâris* can no longer ignore 'modern' challenges. 'We need *‘ulamâ’* who are familiar with both religious as well as modern knowledge to serve the community and reply to the attacks on Islam from the West in the West's own language,' he stresses.[12] While this proposal obviously suggests a defensive posture vis-à-vis the challenge of the West, it also signals a recognition of the importance of 'modern' knowledge and might even represent an Islamic appropriation of 'modernity' itself. In a similar vein, another contributor to the journal, the Deobandî graduate Mawlânâ ‘Abd ar-Rahîm ‘Âbid, writes that many younger *‘ulamâ’* today rightly feel that *madâris* need to broaden their curriculum to include basic education in subjects such as modern mathematics, natural science, social science, Hindi, and English. It is not necessary, he stresses, that students at *madâris* be given detailed instruction in these 'modern' subjects, but they should be familiarized with them on at least an elementary level. He recognizes that this might be construed by some as a betrayal of the Deobandî tradition, but assures his readers that in actual fact this is not so. He informs them that the founder of the *madrasa*, Mawlânâ Muhammad Qâsim Nanawtawî (d. 1877), arranged for Sanskrit to be taught at Deoband in its initial years, and that the above-mentioned Mawlânâ Ashraf ‘Alî Thânawî had, likewise, suggested the need to include Hindi as well as basic modern jurisprudence in the *madrasa* curriculum.[13] In other words, he writes, the Deobandî elders felt that the *madrasa* syllabus should be dynamic in order to equip would-be *‘ulamâ’* with the changing conditions of the world around them, so that they could provide answers to modern questions and challenges. Yet, he notes with distress that when a Muslim doctor based in America offered to send several computers to the *Dâr al-‘ulûm* free of cost for the students, the authorities of the

[12] Ibn Qâsimî (1994).

[13] Thânawî is said to have argued for the inclusion of Sanskrit in the *madrasa* curriculum in order to 'spread Islam among the Hindus' and to 'rebut the Hindu scriptures.' Likewise, he is said to have recommended the learning of 'the languages and sciences of the infidels [*kuffâr*] and the people of falsehood [*ahl-i bâtil*] in order to debate with them.' Ibn Qâsimî (1994: 14f.) [translation mine].

madrasa refused, saying that they would be of no use to them. He laments that by opposing 'modern' knowledge the *madrasa* authorities are actually working against the original vision of the founders of Deoband.[14] Such critiques of the conservatives inside Deoband are routine in the pages of the Association's magazine, and reflect an increasing dissatisfaction among several younger Deobandîs with what they see as the inflexible, authoritarian conservatism of dominant sections of the *madrasa* authorities.

Wârith Mazharî is the editor of the *Tarjumân-i dâr al-'ulûm*. A graduate of the Deoband *madrasa*, he later studied at the *Dâr al-'ulûm* of the Nadwat al-'ulamâ' in Lucknow[15] and then at the Jâmi'a milliyya islâmiyya, New Delhi. Besides editing the journal, he is involved in a number of projects promoting Islamic as well as 'modern' education among Muslims, including among *madrasa* graduates. Like many other contributors to the journal, he too is critical of some aspects of the Deoband *madrasa*, particularly its curriculum, on the grounds that 'in many respects it is irrelevant, and is not able to meet the challenges of modern life.' He stresses the need for the introduction of new subjects as well as new books for teaching traditional disciplines. He says that several texts now being used in the *madâris*, some of which are many centuries old, need to be replaced by modern equivalents. He cites the instance of the *Sharh 'aqâ'id al-'adûdiyya*, a commentary on an earlier theological *summa* by the Iranian Jalâl ad-Dîn ad-Dawânî (d. 1502) written some 600 years ago, which continues to be taught in many Indian *madâris*. It is written in an archaic style, he says, and is full of references to ancient Greek philosophy that students today can hardly comprehend. Rather than providing students with a firm understanding of the basic principles of Islamic theology, he says, it deals with imaginary and hypothetical problems and verbal puzzles. 'For example,' he says, 'it asks questions such as: "Is there one sky or seven or nine?" or "Can the sky be broken into parts?"' He regards this as irrelevant and unscientific. He notes that this book, like many other similar texts, is no longer being taught in schools in the Arab world, and so argues that there is no need why it should be taught at Indian *madâris* any longer, although he is aware that many conservative *'ulamâ'* at Deoband would vehemently disagree with this opinion.

[14] Cf. 'Âbid (1994: 20).

[15] On this particular institution, cf. the chapter of Jan-Peter Hartung in the present volume.

Mazharî advocates a thorough revision of the texts used at Deoband, particularly those used for such core subjects as theology and jurisprudence. The books of theology still used at Deoband, he says, are largely based on ancient Greek philosophy, having been written at a time when Greek philosophy posed a major challenge to Islam. What *madâris* need today, according to him, are books of theology that also take into account the confirmed findings of modern science and that seek to engage with contemporary ideological challenges, such as materialism, existentialism, atheism, Marxism, post-modernism and so on. For this he suggests the introduction of new commentaries on the Qur'ân. Likewise, in the teaching of Islamic jurisprudence, which occupies a central place in the present *madrasa* curriculum, Mazharî advocates radical reform. Opposed to the practice of 'blind following' [*taqlîd*] of jurisprudential precedent, he argues that *fiqh* must always evolve with time, for as conditions change and new issues emerge, new *fiqh* responses must be articulated. He calls for the need to examine matters afresh and to take into account new developments. He agrees that in matters of faith [*'aqâ'id*] and worship [*'ibâdat*] and other areas that are specifically legislated for in the Qur'ân, there can be no 'independent reasoning' [*ijtihâd*], for these are given for all time. However, in large areas in the domain of social transactions [*mu'âmalât*] one must, he says, be open to the possibilities of new interpretations. He regrets that this is strongly discouraged in the Indian *madâris*, suggesting that this could be because it would undermine the authority of the conservative *'ulamâ'*, whose claims as guides of the community rest on their knowledge of the classical texts. He finds hope, however, in the younger generation of Islamic scholars who are increasingly willing to articulate dissent. 'While we respect our predecessors and cherish their great contributions,' he says, 'we must not go to the extent of putting them on a divine pedestal, for "worship of the elders" [*buzurg parastî*] is strongly condemned in Islam.'

Mazharî's vision for the reform of the *madâris* is not limited simply to their curriculum. He recommends that *madâris* that have the necessary funds should make arrangements for vocational training for those students who do not want to become professional *'ulamâ'*. He suggests the need for community leaders to give more attention to girls' education. In this regard he is critical of many *'ulamâ'* who are not in favor of higher education for girls, arguing that their stance is not in accordance with the Qur'ân. He cites the instance of a hotly debated article that he wrote in his journal lauding the achievement of a Muslim girl who came second in the examinations for the Indian Police Service

in 2001, presenting her as a model for other Muslim girls to follow. Mazharî is also critical of the conservative *'ulamâ'* for being indifferent to the religiously plural context of India. He stresses that as community leaders the *'ulamâ'* must play an active role in promoting inter-communal harmony and dialogue, but regrets that this is given almost no attention in the present *madrasa* system.[16]

The influence of the new thinking as represented by individual *'ulamâ'*, such as those associated with the Old Boys' Association on the one hand, and the growing wave of attacks on *madâris* on the other, is today forcing the authorities at Deoband to consider introducing limited reforms in their syllabus and methods of administration. Thanks to the flood of journalists who flocked to Deoband in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001, Deoband now has two new departments, one of English and one of Computer Applications. The media hype about the Deobandî connections of the Tâlibân is said to have forced the authorities of the *madrasa* to relent and finally allow some of their students to learn English and computers so that they could answer the journalists and set at rest their fears of the *madrasa*'s alleged involvement in terrorism.[17] Today, the *madrasa* has arrangements for 25 students who have passed the final-year course to study in each of the two new departments. The *madrasa* has also launched a media cell to document media reports on Islam and Muslim issues, to liaison with journalists and to prepare reports and articles on issues related to the *madâris*. Several leading Deobandî authorities are now themselves calling for Muslims to take to both religious as well as modern education, exhorting them to set up both *madâris* as well as 'modern' schools, wherein arrangements should be made for the proper Islamic education of their children. Contrary to the image of all Deobandîs as 'hardcore conservatives' and vehemently opposed to change, many Deobandîs today would readily concur with Mawlânâ Muhammad Aslam Qâsimî, teacher of *hadîth* at Deoband, when he insists that Muslims must to take to both 'modern' as well as Islamic education, 'in a balanced way.'[18]

[16] Cf. Sikand (2003).

[17] This was finally made possible despite severe opposition from certain conservatives. Wârith Mazharî says that they argued that it would lead the students astray from the path of religion, claiming that it was 'a cunning and sinister ploy to smuggle Zionism into the *madrasa* through the backdoor and thereby poison the minds of the students' (Sikand 2003).

[18] Qâsimî (1995).

The interesting changes that are slowly making their presence felt in Deoband are not an isolated exception. In actual fact, voices for change in the *madâris*, which have been gaining strength in recent years, are not in themselves particularly new. The urgent need for *madâris* to reform has been consistently articulated by Muslim reformers, including many *'ulamâ'* themselves, right from colonial times, although the actual pace of reform in the *madrasa* has been slow and halting, and the limits and actual content of the reform program are still hotly debated.[19] In a recent survey, Siddiqui discovered that the majority of the over 450 *madâris* that he studied in Delhi were in favor of curricular reform and the teaching of 'modern' subjects, at least in the elementary classes.[20] Yet, despite this widespread desire for reform, as Muhammad Qasim Zaman correctly notes, the 'significance of the initiatives towards reforming the *madrasa* itself remains to be appreciated.'[21]

Muslim 'Modernists' and *Madrasa* Reform

Advocates of reform represent considerably different political positions, ranging from those who see themselves as completely apolitical, to those who feel that reform is needed in order to integrate *madrasa* students into the wider society, to those who insist on reform in the belief that it is only by combining Islamic with 'modern' (particularly scientific) education that Muslims can win political power and establish an Islamic state, in the absence of which Muslims are believed to be incapable of leading truly Islamic lives. This latter position is articulated by individuals and groups who might be called Islamists. Advocates of 'modernization' of the *madâris* share with their opponents a commitment to the Islamic tradition and present their schemes for 'modernized' *madâris* as a return to the 'authentic' tradition as represented by the Prophet and his companions, rather than as a radical departure from it. The very notion of the 'authentic' Islamic tradition, being a social construct and an ongoing, constantly evolving project, is itself fiercely contested. Thus, different versions of what constitutes the 'authentic' Islamic tradition are put forward and debated in the course of advocating *madrasa* reforms.

[19] Cf. for instance, the several papers of advocates of *madrasa* reform from among the *'ulamâ'* in Bedâr (1995).
[20] Cf. Khan (2003: 59).
[21] Zaman (1999: 295).

Advocates for the introduction of 'modern' subjects in the *madrasa* curriculum are also aware of the limits of reform, and there is considerable debate about how far reform should proceed. This tension centers on the perceived role and function of the *madrasa*. Those who see the *madâris* as aimed at training students as religious professionals argue that 'modern' subjects should be allowed only insofar as they might help their students understand and interpret Islam in the light of 'modern' knowledge. Others, recognizing that not all the graduates of the *madâris* might be able or even want to become professional *'ulamâ'*, have suggested the creation of two streams of education in the *madâris*. In the first stream, students who want to acquire just a general knowledge of Islam and then would prefer to go on to join regular schools would be taught basic religious subjects along with 'modern' disciplines. The second stream would cater to students who wish to train as professional *'ulamâ'*, and would focus on 'religious' subjects, teaching 'modern' disciplines only to the extent necessary for them to interpret Islam in the light of contemporary needs. A vocal minority insists, on the other hand, that an entirely new system of education must take the place of the traditional *madâris*, where a unified syllabus, based on a harmonious blend of 'religious' and 'modern' subjects would be taught in equal proportions, and whose graduates could go on to train for a range of occupations, both religious as well as others. Some go so far as to suggest that the larger *madâris*, after being suitably reformed, be converted into universities funded by the state, with the smaller *madâris* being affiliated to them. This, however, is not a widely shared view.[22] More acceptable is the suggestion that *madrasa* education be reformed in such a way that allows *madrasa* graduates to join regular universities after they finish their basic religious course.

While advocates of reform seem agreed on the importance of the *madâris* as institutions geared to preserving and promoting Islamic knowledge and Muslim identity, there is considerable variation in their approaches to the nature and extent of the reform that they advocate as well as the rationales that they offer to put forward their case. There seems, however, a consensus that the core of the reform project should consist of modification in the syllabus and the methods of teaching, particular stress being given to the teaching of 'modern' subjects, such as mathematics, the social and the natural sciences, and languages such as English and Hindi. New books for teaching 'religious' subjects

[22] Cf. Islâhî (n.d.: 152).

and the excision of certain subjects and texts considered outdated or irrelevant in today's context are also generally advocated. Although some proponents of reform go so far as to call for new ways of imagining Islamic theology and law, these are clearly in a minority.

The reformists' rationale for introducing 'modern' disciplines in the *madâris* is framed in principally four ways. First, 'modernization' is said to be a recovery of the 'authentic,' holistic Islamic understanding of knowledge as all-embracing, covering worship as well as social relations and worldly pursuits, knowledge of God and of His creation. Second, it is said to be indispensable in order that the *'ulamâ'* may recover what is seen as their fast declining authority as spokespersons of Islam. Third, it is expressed as a necessary means for Muslims to prosper in this world, in addition to the next. Finally, it is seen as essential in order for the *'ulamâ'* to engage in *tablîgh*, Islamic missionary work. All these tie in with a new, more activist understanding of the role of the *'ulamâ'*. The *'ulamâ'*, it is envisaged, are no longer to remain restricted to teaching in the *madâris*. Rather, armed with 'modern,' in addition to 'traditional,' knowledge, they are to play an important role as community leaders.

The ongoing debate on *madrasa* reforms thus seems to have provoked a certain degree of introspection on the part of *madrasa* authorities themselves, goaded by pressure from non-*'ulamâ'* Muslim actors, the Indian state as well as external sources. Whether this would result in any major or structural transformation of *madrasa* education in the long term remains, however, to be seen.

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Part IV

A View from Within

12

The Introduction of Natural Sciences in *Madrasa* Education in India

SYED ABUL HASHIM RIZVI

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE EDITOR

As already pointed out in both the preface and introduction to this volume, the conference on which most of these articles are based was highly eventful, mainly due to the insightful and well-presented topics. It was, moreover, complemented by a number of contributions from the Indian *‘ulamâ’* on the one hand, and devoted Muslim educationists on the other, who discussed the issue of reforms of the Indian *madrasa* system in the aftermath of 9/11 from their respective points of view.

The organizers of the conference were in the fortunate position to welcome Syed Abul Hashim Rizvi among the participants. Professor Rizvi teaches at the Department of Physics at ‘Alîgarh Muslim University and is, besides his teaching obligations, currently director of the 'Centre for Promotion of Science,' which is affiliated to the university. This Centre was established in March 1985 under Sections 5(2)(c) and 5(2)(9A) of the A.M.U. (Amendment) Act of 1981, which was passed by the Indian government among other reasons in order to enable ‘Alîgarh Muslim University to establish specific centers 'to promote especially the educational and cultural advancement of the Muslims in India.'[1] One major objective of the Centre is the introduction and promotion of the teaching of natural sciences in *dînî madâris* in India, which is felt to be an urgent requirement to bring these traditional Muslim educational institutions to a level that enables *madrasa* graduates to find employment not only within Islamic institutions but also in other sectors of the Indian society.

[1] www.amu.ac.in/c_p_sc.htm [accessed November 11, 2004].

As one who has been associated with this Centre for a considerable period of time, Professor Rizvi provided the participants of the conference with an account of his experiences, perceptions and insights gained from his intensive interaction with *dînî madâris* in India. Moreover, being himself a physicist, Professor Rizvi turned out to be an ardent advocate of modern natural sciences, a fact that fuelled controversy among all the participants of the conference. Most of the hesitations and objections about his presentation seemed to have their roots in different concepts of knowledge and, consequently, of science and, finally, of education. This problem has already been dealt with in the introduction to this volume at some length and does not need to be repeated in its entirety. However, we consider it meaningful to take up at least some crucial points in this debate once again in order to allow an easier location of the following portrayal of the Centre's activities within the framework of promotion and introduction of the teaching of natural sciences in *dînî madâris* in India by its current director, Professor Syed Abul Hashim Rizvi.

If a traditional Islamic notion of knowledge [*'ilm*] is applied, then it would appear as if there is no space for the introduction of academic disciplines formerly alien to the two established systems of religious sciences—the so-called 'transmitted sciences' [*manqûlât*] and the 'rational sciences' [*ma'qûlât*]. Nevertheless, a number of renowned Muslim thinkers, of whom a significant number were from 19th-century India, have attempted to show that there is no contradiction at all between the Qur'ânic revelation and modern (i.e. Western) natural sciences and the technologies associated with them. What appears to be of decisive importance, however, is the intention [*nîya*] behind all scientific research; here seems to lie the focus of contention between the Modern Western and the Islamic approaches towards the natural sciences. Whereas the latter aims to gain as thorough an understanding as possible of God's final revelation to Man and His creation in each of its aspects, the Western paradigm of knowledge—at least since the triumph of positivism from the mid-19th century until today—rests on the conviction of constant progress by way of scientific research, which shall lead to an ever-increasing command over nature.

It seems as if it is only these respective premises that need to be clarified in order to avoid the rejection of the introduction of natural sciences and technologies into the *dînî madâris* by a considerable number of *'ulamâ'*, due to the wrong assumption that this would imply

the adoption of the Western paradigm of knowledge with all its implications. This, as the *‘ulamâ’* claim, would aim at the disintegration of the Islamic concept of *‘ilm*. As will become evident from the following outline given by Professor Rizvi, the 'Centre for Promotion of Science' puts a lot of effort into convincing the administrative as well as the teaching staff of *dînî madâris* in India of the compatibility of Islam and modern natural sciences, and of the advantages that the introduction of natural science education into *madrasa* curricula will have in the long run.

—Jan-Peter Hartung

The Need for and the Role of *Dini Madaris*

Islam is a revealed religion. Its two main sources are the Qur’ân and the *sunna* of the Prophet Muhammad, enshrined in the *ahâdîth* and the accounts on the Prophet's life [*sîra*]. These are considered sacred for believers and provide detailed instructions on the various aspects of human life. For believers it is therefore essential to learn and to be able to interpret the revealed knowledge properly. That is roughly the philosophy behind the establishment of *madâris*.

It is important to accept *madâris* as a part of the religious traditions of Muslims. They cannot be wished away. Their role in providing free education (although in a rather traditional way) with boarding and lodging facilities to the Muslim masses needs to be recognized. In general, *madâris* help youngsters from economically weak families to acquire at least some education and thus become disciplined and useful members of the society instead of becoming wayward. They have to be taken seriously as educational institutions, since they are educating a very large number of Muslims. They are thus playing a constructive role in the pluralist society of India, which should be appreciated. Moreover, the teachers of *madâris* have some outstanding traits that are rare among teachers from secular schools. They adhere to high moral principles, are dedicated and selfless and lead simple pious lives. Finally, another noteworthy feature of *madâris* is that the dropout rate of *madrasa* students is negligible.

However, there is the need to reconsider the syllabi and curricula of *dînî madâris* in order to combine their two-fold task: to strengthen the Muslim religious identity by means of the administration and dissemination of religious knowledge on the one hand, and to provide young

Muslims with all the tools and capabilities necessary to face the needs of contemporary secular Indian society on the other. Therefore, the role of *dînî madâris* in the provision of contemporary education to Muslims is crucial. It is primarily because of this that in 1985 the 'Alîgarh Muslim University took the initiative and established the 'Centre for Promotion of Science.'

The 'Centre for Promotion of Science'

The need for such a Centre, established exclusively for the promotion of education in the natural sciences amongst Indian Muslims particularly in *dînî madâris*, emanates from the following considerations:

Indian Muslims, though a minority in the country, are substantial in numbers—about 140 million. It is a well-established fact that they not only belong to the economically weak strata of Indian society but are also quite backward in terms of modern education, particularly in the natural sciences. If this situation is allowed to persist, it is going to hinder and retard the progress of the whole country. In these days of explosion of scientific knowledge and its expanding frontiers, with numerous consequential technological spin-offs, no nation can afford to have such a huge chunk of its population uneducated in the natural sciences and technology. We have to address this problem seriously if we are to avoid disastrous consequences.

For the past several centuries the intellectual activity of the Muslim community has been confined mainly to literature, religious studies and a few subjects in the social sciences. The tradition of scientific pursuits has been disregarded, at least since the mid-19th century. Consequently, the realization of the ever-growing importance of knowledge of physical, biological, mathematical and technical sciences is lacking.

A vast majority of Muslim students acquire their school education either in *madâris* or in Muslim-managed secular schools (usually in Urdu medium). In the former, the emphasis is on religious education alone and teaching of the natural sciences is almost non-existent, while in the latter education in natural sciences is in very bad shape due to lack of qualified and committed teachers and proper laboratories. Only a small fraction of Muslim students is fortunate enough to go to public schools and acquire quality education in these subjects related to the contemporary world.

In order to turn attention to this backwardness in the education on natural sciences and to take a small step towards its mitigation, 'Alîgarh Muslim University established the 'Centre for Promotion of Science' as an extension service of the University. The main two objectives of the Centre are:

a) to create awareness amongst Indian Muslims of the importance of acquiring and creating scientific knowledge and to provide possible help to minimize their backwardness in the natural sciences, in order to enable *madrasa* graduates to find their places in the Indian society according to the public needs of the day; and
b) to help in the introduction of regular teaching of natural sciences in *madâris* and in the improvement of the quality of natural science education in Muslim schools.

Various programs are organized by the Centre in order to achieve these aims. The backbone of these are teacher training programs, such as the organization of Introductory Science Courses and Training Courses for *madrasa* teachers, Subject Refresher Courses, workshops, courses on the use of computers in teaching, etc. Apart from other activities, until now the Centre has organized 15 Introductory Science Courses (of 12 days duration) for *madrasa* teachers and three Conferences of *'ulamâ'*, teachers, scientists, and educationists.

Teachers from all over India, and apparently a considerable number of *'ulamâ'* too, participate in these activities. We find that the *madrasa* teachers who attend our courses in particular are very enthusiastic about learning new things, especially through laboratory demonstrations. Recently the number of applications for attending such courses has significantly increased. Apart from providing all support for attending these courses, the participants are given lecture notes, course material and books on the natural sciences published by the Centre, as well as certificates of participation.

In spite of several limitations, the Centre has established its credibility and helped in creating awareness and interest in acquiring education in the natural sciences in *dînî madâris*. The Centre–*madrasa* interaction has also helped in removing some of the initial misgivings and fears regarding the teaching of natural sciences in *madâris*. The work of the Centre has won recognition from the University Grants Commission through its 'Hari Om Ashram Trust Award for the Interaction between Science and Society.'

Impediments and Misgivings about Education in the Natural Sciences in *Dīnī Madāris*: Perception of *Madāris*

The introduction of the teaching of natural sciences and modern mathematics in *madâris* is a formidable task. Our experience through interaction with *madâris* has brought up the following difficulties from their point-of-view:

a) There is a fear that the inclusion of natural sciences in the curricula of *dînî madâris* will dilute their main thrust, which is on religious education.
b) The education in *madâris* is imparted with the objective of making their students good human beings by inculcating the moral and ethical values of Islam. This requires a commitment arising out of faith. They feel that, in order to educate Muslims, one cannot split Islam from its educational objectives as secular Muslim institutions tend to do.
c) The influence of Western secular civilization would increase with what is perceived as its attendant evils. The students of *madâris* would be exposed to what from an Islamic perspective appear as the same undesirable social traits as can be observed in students of secular institutions. Eventually, irreligiosity would spread.
d) The syllabi of *madâris* would have to be redesigned with cuts in teaching hours of conventional subjects to make room for contemporary education. Many *madâris*, though willing to introduce education in the natural sciences, are reluctant to make these cuts.
e) Introduction of teachings in the natural sciences would encroach upon the time required for the training of students to be qualified religious functionaries.
f) The *madâris* would not be able to preserve their unique, Islamic ethical values and traditions.
g) Autonomy of individual *madâris* may be compromised if a government-supported common curriculum or a Central Board of *madrasa* Education is imposed.
h) A section of *madâris* holds the view that acquiring religious education is compulsory for all Muslims [*fard ‘ayn*], whereas acquiring contemporary scientific education is optional [*fard kifâya*], and so it is enough if only some Muslims acquire it.

Major Practical Difficulties in the Introduction of Natural Science Education: Perception of the 'Centre for Promotion of Science'

Apart from ideological and psychological difficulties, we feel that the major practical difficulties in the implementation of natural science teaching programs are:

a) The teaching methods in today's *madâris* are primarily descriptive and memory-based, whereas teaching in the natural sciences encourages questioning and lays emphasis on knowledge obtained through observation. Even though we know of the historical development of *madrasa* education and its methods and of some trends and developments that encouraged logical reasoning by the students, we have to concede that the emphasis on mere memorization of texts is not entirely suitable to meet the public demands of the day.
b) Appropriate textbooks on natural sciences and teachers' guides are not easily available, perhaps because designing courses on the natural sciences for *madâris* and the production of teaching material are considered tasks which cannot be fulfilled easily or in the short run.
c) Lack of availability of qualified teachers for the natural sciences and modern mathematics in *madâris*, who may be willing to teach in small towns where most of the *madâris* are located.
d) The disparities in the salaries of teachers of natural sciences in other schools and *madrasa* teachers (who are usually paid very low salaries).
e) Overloaded existing syllabi in *madâris*.
f) Lack of financial resources to facilitate scientific laboratories, natural science kits and other resource material.
g) The attitude of many *'ulamâ'* and heads of *madâris* towards education in the natural sciences is not very positive. There may be an element of fear of inadequacy in handling the complexities of modern education and consequent changes in the traditional modes of teaching. Some of them may be even afraid of losing their privileged positions.
h) Lack of proper survey work to collect scientific data on the status of natural science education in *madâris* and its statistical analysis to draw proper inferences.

The Approach Adopted by the Centre for the Introduction of Science Education in *Madāris*

The main idea is to provide support for the *madâris* to enable them to bring about the desired changes by themselves. This is essential for a development that can be sustained. The changes have to be brought about from within and should not be forced from outside. The teaching of the natural sciences has to be taken up by the teachers of *madâris* themselves. The Centre focusses on steps to motivate the *madâris* as a whole, as well as individual teachers, to take up education in the natural sciences. It also provides effective help through teacher training programs and production of natural science resource material in Urdu. The salient features of our interaction with *madâris* involve the following:

a) Maintenance of regular contacts with *madâris*, mainly through correspondence and through the teachers who attend the Centre's courses and conferences.
b) Convincing the administrators and the teaching staff of the *dînî madâris* that modernization of education in *madâris* does not mean compromising faith and that *madâris* can be modernized within the framework of Islam.
c) Reminding them that the natural sciences are the common heritage of all mankind, to which Muslims had in the past contributed significantly, and thus helped to provide the foundation for later significant developments in Western societies, culminating in the Enlightenment movement in 18th-century Europe. This tradition of mutual exchange of ideas should be re-established.
d) Explaining that antagonism of natural sciences and religion is a Western tradition and has nothing to do with Islam as such. It can be argued that Islam in fact lays great emphasis on acquiring all kinds of knowledge, since all knowledge is considered as having been derived from God. Renowned Muslim thinkers like Sayyid Ahmad Khân have attempted to show that Islam and modern natural sciences do not contradict each other.
e) Pointing out that inviting others to Islam would be ineffective unless it is in the context and jargon of the contemporary world.
f) Trying to convince them that this Centre is aware of the importance of *madâris* and is alert to their sensitivities in preserving the character of their institutions, though we may differ from their old-fashioned syllabi and methods of teaching.

g) Convincing the *madâris* that the voices of credible individuals and organizations that are genuinely interested in the development of *madrasa* education should be seriously taken into account by redesigning their curricula and introducing teaching of the natural sciences.
h) Pointing out that the education of Muslims involves not only the 'word of God' (i.e. Qur'ân) but also the 'work of God' (i.e. *scientific* knowledge of the universe as God's creation).
i) Production of suitable natural science resource material in Urdu for use in *madâris* and its distribution amongst prospective teachers of the natural sciences in the *dînî madâris*.
j) Organization of regular training courses for *madrasa* teachers for teaching natural sciences.
k) Organization of computer courses for training teachers for use of computers in teaching and in everyday life.
l) Development of a library with natural science resource material (in print and electronic form) for targeted schools and *madâris*.

Summary of Information Extracted from the Responses Received from *Dīnī Madāris*

From time to time the Centre did mail—and still does—various questionnaires to about 1,400 *madâris* with which it had some contact, seeking information on various aspects of their set-up in order to enable the Centre to modify its agenda according to the particular needs of the *madâris*. Responses from at least 192 *madâris* have been received over a period of a few years.

However, it needs to be pointed out that this data is not the outcome of a proper and scientifically conducted survey, nor is it treated as such, and has therefore not been statistically analyzed. It merely provides empirical information to draw some tentative and general conclusions regarding the status of the education in the natural sciences in *dînî madâris*:

a) Assuming that only those *madâris* that are interested in natural science education have responded, about 13 percent (of those contacted) are involved in teaching natural sciences.
b) There has been a definite trend towards inclusion of natural science teaching in Indian *dînî madâris* during the last 10 years (i.e. much before September 11, 2001). After 1992, this percentage is about 56 percent of those *madâris* which had responded to the questionnaire.

c) About 33 percent of *madâris* have reported teaching natural sciences from the very beginning.
d) There is a significant number of *madâris* (about 50 percent of those that responded) that are teaching natural sciences up to the tenth class.
e) About 14 percent of *madâris* have between six and ten faculty members teaching natural sciences, and about 90 percent of *madâris* have up to five faculty members teaching natural sciences.
f) Most of *madâris* where teaching of the natural sciences has been introduced in the last 10 years are small- or medium-sized in terms of student strength.
g) The need of a specific and scientifically conducted survey is evident. The statistical analysis of such a survey will enable us to draw firm conclusions about the various aspects of natural science teaching in *madâris*.

Concluding Remarks

To sum up, the 'Centre for Promotion of Science' feels that, in the event of introducing natural science education in *madâris*, the following points need to be addressed:

a) The task of introducing natural science education and sustaining it in a large number of *madâris* is gigantic as well as crucial. It requires the concerted efforts of much bigger organizations (than this Centre), with resources, suitable manpower and commitment to match the task.
b) Efforts directed at the production of suitable teaching materials in the natural sciences and teachers' guides are essential for sustaining natural science education in *dînî madâris*.
c) It is important for the organizations involved in this task to establish their credibility and credentials vis-à-vis *madâris* by showing genuine interest in their educational system and its problems. They should provide all possible help to the *madâris* in themselves bringing about the necessary changes in their system of education within their paradigm of life.
d) It will be more practical to make efforts to initiate natural science teaching programs without trying to change the fundamentals of the system.

e) Appropriate methodology of teaching natural sciences in *dînî madâris*, using Islamic experiences, has to be developed and used.

f) It is encouraging to note that teaching in the natural sciences has been taken up by *madâris* though the pace is rather slow. This initial stage has teething problems, where encouragement and help is essential.

g) Along with natural science education, there is great need and acceptance for vocational training programs within the *madrasa* system.

Afterword

Dialogue and Cooperation with Islamic World

GUNTER MULACK

Over three years have passed since the horrific attacks in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, propelled our relations with the Islamic world to the top of the political agenda. Islamically motivated terrorism, a phenomenon that has now assumed global dimensions, presents us with a completely new challenge.

The latest attacks in the West—the bombing of commuter trains in Madrid—have made it clear that anyone can be a target. The Muslim world too is threatened, as the attacks in Riyadh, Casablanca and also Istanbul have shown.

Meeting the immediate threat will require more emphasis to be placed on security and intelligence. The fight against international terrorism—as represented by al-Qâʻida and other movements—is far from over. Going by current trends, it is going to be one of the main security challenges facing us over the coming decade.

We all agree that terrorism must be fought with all possible means. But it is also crucial to look at the root causes of Islamist terrorism, to see what steps we ourselves can take to better understand what leads people to support such movements and address the underlying reasons for their rise. This requires, both at the European Union (EU) and at the bilateral level, a reappraisal of our policies towards the Islamic world, in particular the Middle East and North Africa, but also Central and South Asia.

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It was in this context that the German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer decided to establish at the Foreign Office, parallel to the new structures created to combat terrorism, a task force for dialogue with the Islamic

world and appointed me as commissioner with a mandate to foster such dialogue. In addition, we have recruited more than 30 specialists, who are attached to our missions abroad. Our key priority is to develop an active dialogue with the Islamic world and to devise policies and cooperative projects that will not only enhance mutual understanding but will also, by joining forces to tackle existing political, social and economic deficits, help win the battle, we hope, for hearts and minds. The overwhelming majority of Muslims around the world want to live in peace and dignity and do not subscribe to the idea of a new militant *jihâd*. However, we should not underestimate their feelings of resentment and humiliation vis-à-vis both their own governments and the West, as epitomized by the policies of the Bush administration. To make any progress towards building better mutual understanding, we first need to identify those factors that have given rise to widely held prejudices and threat perceptions.

Education is, in my view, the key to knowledge and understanding. If we fail to invest in better education, we are in effect giving free rein to the extremists. How can we expect people to be tolerant and open to new ideas when the spread of knowledge is so limited and in many cases one-sided? To be sure, education is not just about factual knowledge; it is also concerned with the building of character and personality.

In many parts of the so-called Third World we are witnessing a crisis in state education. Lack of funds, poor teacher training and limited access to schooling are widespread. But there are a whole range of social and economic obstacles that need to be overcome if countries are to pursue a successful modernization strategy that will equip them for the globalized world of the 21st century. While there are plenty of success stories in South East Asia and parts of India, for example, my impression is that many Muslim countries could do better in this drive for reform and competitiveness.

The new focus which is needed in Europe's relations with the Muslim world—and particularly the wider Middle East—could be described as a partnership for progress and reform, a partnership that seeks to intensify cooperation and dialogue with the countries of the region in the economic, social, political, and cultural fields.

The aim would be to help these countries reform and modernize as well as to promote concepts of political pluralism and democracy. Democracy cannot be exported like Coca-Cola, however. In any country it has to first put down roots before it can grow.

Yet there is nothing incompatible between democracy and the teachings of Islam. The best thing we in Europe can do, I believe, is to

support those in the Muslim world who are working for change from within, who want to see greater pluralism and a better future for all their fellow citizens.

* * *

Any attempt by outsiders to impose change will not be acceptable. Our role is to intensify the dialogue with partner countries in the Muslim world at the level of government as well as civil society, and listen more attentively to their ideas, views and criticisms. Only if we conduct this dialogue with credible partners will we be able to design cooperation projects that help create the conditions which will enable democracy and pluralism to thrive.

The cooperation we seek would not be confined to government actors only, but involve a broad range of partners representing civil society on both sides.

To meet this challenge successfully, we need to work together and develop common policies, which EU partners can either implement bilaterally or jointly through the EU.

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Let us look at some of the key factors contributing to the rise of fundamentalist and radical movements, notably in the Islamic world. It goes without saying, by the way, that neither fundamentalism nor religious and political extremism are phenomena specific to the Muslim world. We in the West have had our own painful experiences with such movements, which cause abundant trouble even now.

One factor whose importance should not be underrated, I believe, is economic and social underdevelopment. In many Muslim societies people have yet to enter the modern world, the world of globalization. Modernization is often rejected as a foreign phenomenon deeply threatening to traditional Muslim values. This is an attitude familiar to us from our own history. For more than 150 years after the French Revolution, democracy was viewed by the Roman Catholic Church as a threatening and perverse notion. But can we afford to wait that long? To me that appears highly doubtful.

The recent United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] report on Arab Human Development—which was written by Arab development and education specialists—documents very clearly the lack of

progress in this field. According to this report—which focusses on the Arab world but whose findings in many respects apply to other Islamic countries as well—the countries surveyed lag behind the rest of the world on almost every score, including freedom, democracy, human development, research, education and information technology. The energies, education and entrepreneurial spirit of their people are wasted by governments which—with a few exceptions—have no democratic legitimacy. Bad governance, corruption, nepotism, high unemployment, rule-of-law deficits, discrimination against women and the lack of freedom in a host of areas have heightened the deep frustration felt by many young Muslims and engendered a sense of hopelessness. Some 60 percent are under the age of 25 and many see no prospect, under the prevailing circumstances, of building a better life. Without economic, social and political development they know they have no future. They view themselves as victims both of their own ruling regimes and of the West, which backs them. The legacy of colonialism and imperialism has clearly contributed to this state of affairs. A combination of social deprivation and political oppression has encouraged the emergence of radical ideologies, which have now gained a momentum of their own and won substantial support among frustrated and disappointed young Muslims. Many young people go through an identity crisis and have difficulty finding their place in society. While the feeling of belonging to the *umma* of Islam has been a unifying factor, it has also boosted the spread of radical Islamist movements operating globally in the name of religion.

Suspicion and hostility towards Western ideas is fuelled by the public perception that the West is only interested in hegemony. That is the true reason, it is felt, for the West's support for autocratic and repressive regimes in the region. Hence its self-proclaimed mission to encourage human rights and democracy is regarded as blatant hypocrisy. There is a widespread view that the economic world order is dominated by the West, which resolutely pursues its own interests at the expense of the Third World. The perception that the West gives one-sided political support to Israel has generated further disappointment as well as mistrust and doubts concerning the Western agenda. This all adds up to a serious credibility gap that we cannot overlook: in the eyes of the Arab world especially, but also of the Muslim world at large, our political discourse is not matched by deeds.

Neither the war in Afghanistan against the Tâlibân and al-Qâʻida nor the war against Iraq and its occupation by American and other foreign

forces have done anything to encourage Muslims to trust Western offers of cooperation. The current situation in Iraq is hardly likely to inspire confidence in democracy either.

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There is a growing belief in Muslim societies that the West is leading a kind of new crusade against the Islamic world. In the hearts and minds of many Muslims, notions of an impending clash of civilizations—something we strongly want to avoid—are finding increasing resonance. However, from my own experience over the past two years and the work we have been doing to promote dialogue and collaborative projects, I have found that our approach can be notably effective in breaking down prejudice and combating suspicion and hatred. But consistency is crucial: in everything we do we must act in a way that is credible and acceptable to people in the Muslim world.

A frank and open dialogue means that we must also listen more carefully to our partners and take their ideas and concerns more seriously. Many Muslims are dissatisfied both with politics and with the lack of tangible development in their respective countries.

The lesson for us in Europe is that we should focus more strongly on such popular needs and demands. But we should not limit our cooperation to government actors; it is essential to involve civil society as well. In this context we should concentrate, I believe, on the following priorities:

1. Promoting economic liberalization and economic development. This includes promoting equal opportunities and a more equitable distribution of income.
2. Strengthening the rule of law and an independent judiciary.
3. Fostering good governance and accountability to ensure transparent and responsible decision making.
4. Strengthening freedom of the press and opinion.
5. Promoting equal opportunities for women in Muslim countries.
6. Promoting political pluralism and democratic participation in the political process.
7. Raising the standard of education, including higher education.
8. Supporting the development of tolerant and moderate Islam in the Muslim world. Islam is no monolithic system of beliefs. It encompasses a rich variety of schools of thought ranging from rigid 'Wahhâbism' to tolerant Sufism and even secularist approaches.

Clearly it is for Muslims themselves to debate what political and social role Islam should play in their respective societies. We can only point to what our own history has taught us in this regard. It took Europe hundreds of years and many bloody wars to agree on religious tolerance. Respect for other faiths, mutual tolerance and acceptance of differences within the wider community is very important if people are to live together without strife or friction.

9. Accepting the role of non-violent Muslim groups in developing civil society on the basis of Islam, as long as we agree on a common basis of universal human values and norms.
10. Engaging in a serious dialogue on human rights.

In our dialogue and cooperation with the Muslim world we should concentrate particularly on intensifying cooperation and assistance in the field of education at both school and university level. Here the respective roles of the state schools and the *madâris* clearly need readjusting. While *madâris* have become important providers of education and social welfare for the poor, state schools have been largely marginalized. In many Muslim countries I have visited, however, I am afraid that neither system appears to be providing the kind of modern education essential for today's world, which is increasingly knowledge-based. They do not teach critical thinking, tolerance or good citizenship, nor do they teach science and languages to an acceptable standard. The failure of state education has in fact helped strengthen radical tendencies in Islam, since in many cases the *madâris* offer a narrow and highly ideological brand of education. The reform of education has been grossly neglected and in some countries illiteracy is even on the increase. One area that needs particular attention is the development of school curricula and the social sciences, for well-conceived efforts in this direction can clearly pave the way for enhanced political participation and democracy.

The *madrasa* system is part of a long and noble tradition of Islamic learning. For centuries these schools produced the next generation of religious scholars and clerics. It was to these schools, too, that the sons of the Muslim elite were sent in 19th-century India, for example.

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But over the past decades some disturbing new trends have emerged. While in 1947 there were around 270 *madâris* in Pakistan, today they

number some 40,000. They dominate the education system, such as it is, and an estimated 10–15 percent of them have become havens for extremists. About 5 percent of Pakistan's *madâris* provide a modern education and are doing well. Only 10 percent of them have been officially registered.

Many *madâris* in Pakistan are in the hands of extremists prepared to use violence in pursuit of their ends. They preach not tolerance but hatred towards non-Muslims. In an environment of religious extremism and poverty, such doctrines help produce future generations of *jihâdî*s.

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In India the situation is very different. There the *madâris* are the main vehicle for fostering Muslim identity in a non-Muslim state. For many poor families they also offer the only hope of an education for their children.

For South Asia generally, the best solution would be to give all sections of the community access to education by upgrading state schools and introducing a modern curriculum that will give students the skills now in demand. A vast amount needs to be done and we should support all efforts in this direction.

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We in Germany see it as a special challenge to assist in this process in Afghanistan and, at a later stage and on a very different level, also in Iraq. Any failure in those two countries would further damage the West's credibility and result in growing alienation and mistrust.

When I see the happy eyes of the girls in Afghanistan who are now able to go to school, I know this is the right way. Nothing in the Qur'ân forbids education for women and girls; indeed, the Qur'ân and all the basic teachings of Islam emphasize the importance of the quest for knowledge and the value of a good education.

In Germany, too, religion plays a role in society, but it is in many respects a very different one from that found in countries such as India or Pakistan. We are convinced that mutual tolerance and respect for other religions is essential if different communities are to coexist amicably in multi-religious societies. Freedom to practise one's religion is, we believe, one of the fundamental rights everyone is entitled to enjoy. These principles have to be passed on, of course, to future generations. However, it would be wrong to regard knowledge of foreign

languages and cultures, individual responsibility and creativity, openness to other ideas and independent thinking as features of democratic societies alone. These are values also found in Islam, especially during the period known as the golden age of Islam. At that time the Islamic world stood for everything that was outward-looking and modern, both in terms of science and scholarship and in terms of tolerance and respect for others. That should be an inspiration to us all as we strive together for a better future.

If we can build a new partnership between EU member countries and our partners in the Muslim world and act with common purpose, we may in the long term succeed in overcoming the obstacles that still impede economic, social and political progress. If by our joint efforts we succeed in dismantling those repressive and undemocratic structures that breed fundamentalism and violence, we can all look forward to a brighter future.

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Obviously a major component of the proposed partnership would be a proactive, integrated strategy to address the economic and social problems of the Muslim world. Development cooperation can and must play an important role in preventing fundamentalism by enhancing economic, social and educational opportunity as well as by improving services, especially in the health and education sectors. Last but not least, there is a clear need to intensify our media work: much still remains to be done to promote a more accurate and credible image of Europe in the Muslim world, and a more informed view of the Muslim world and Islam in Europe.

Many people now have access to satellite television and are much better informed than in the past about what is going on in the world. But TV stations, too, have their own agendas and do not always provide objective and accurate coverage of events. In this respect, professional codes of conduct, better training for journalists and a more diverse media landscape could help ensure that people in all parts of the world have access to reliable and objective information.

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As I have already pointed out, reform in the Muslim world can only be accomplished from within, by the concerned societies themselves.

However, we can and should do our utmost to encourage not only governments but also and especially civil society in these countries to play a constructive role in preparing for a better future. Clearly Western countries too stand to benefit from a stable, prosperous and democratic Muslim world, which would also diminish the threat of Islamically motivated terrorism.

It is vital that Europe engages in a new partnership with the Muslim and especially the Arab World. But we should keep one thing in mind: if the Western world is to have any credibility when it addresses these issues, there must be real and sustained progress on resolving the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and there must also be progress on the ground in Iraq, including the formation of an effective and representative government that serves the interests of the Iraqi people. Unfortunately, progress on both these counts seems at the moment rather far off. This clearly undermines our credibility in the eyes of many Muslims and frustrates our efforts to win hearts and minds in the Muslim world.

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However, despite the very real difficulties and setbacks to peace in the region, there is no doubt that only an intensified and genuinely frank dialogue between Europe and the Muslim world, along with enhanced cooperation and partnership, can pave the way to building a better future for everyone in the decades to come. That is our obligation to future generations.

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Index